

NEWS RELEASE



Governor Bob Taft

**TAFT ANNOUNCES APPROVAL FOR
FEDERAL ASSISTANCE TO 59 OHIO COUNTIES**

COLUMBUS (February 15, 2005) – At the request of Governor Bob Taft, the President has declared 59 Ohio counties eligible for federal disaster assistance following ice, snow and flooding beginning December 22, 2004 and ending January 2005.

“I am pleased that President Bush has responded favorably to my request for disaster relief for the families and governments in the affected counties,” Governor Taft said. “Although nothing can completely undo the damage to these communities, this financial assistance will go a long way in helping put lives back together.”

President George W. Bush signed the disaster declaration today allowing federal individual assistance to be made available to Athens, Belmont, Clark, Coshocton, Crawford, Delaware, Franklin, Henry, Jefferson, Logan, Morgan, Muskingum, Pickaway, Pike, Ross, Scioto, Warren and Washington counties.

Individuals and businesses who have suffered damages or losses in the counties receiving federal individual assistance, may begin the disaster application process by calling FEMA’s toll-free number: **1-800-621-FEMA (3362)**. The speech or hearing impaired may call **TTY 1-800-462-7585**. Also, people with Internet access can register at <http://www.fema.gov>.

The President also signed a declaration allowing federal public assistance to be made available to Adams, Allen, Ashland, Athens, Auglaize, Belmont, Brown, Carroll, Champaign, Clermont, Columbiana, Coshocton, Crawford, Darke, Delaware, Fairfield, Fayette, Franklin, Guernsey, Hancock, Hardin, Harrison, Henry, Highland, Hocking, Holmes, Huron, Jefferson, Knox, Licking, Logan, Lorain, Marion, Medina, Meigs, Mercer, Monroe, Morgan, Morrow, Muskingum, Noble, Paulding, Perry, Pickaway, Pike, Richland, Ross, Scioto, Seneca, Shelby, Stark, Tuscarawas, Union, Van Wert, Washington, Wayne and Wyandot counties.

Local governments and certain private non-profit organizations in counties receiving public assistance are eligible to apply. Federal public assistance pays 75 percent of eligible costs. The storms caused an estimated \$127.5 million in damage to local public infrastructure including costs of emergency protective measures and repairs to rural electrical cooperatives, and preliminary damage assessments indicate an estimated \$18 million in potential federal disaster assistance for individuals. There is more than \$123 million in insured personal losses.

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