

NEWS RELEASE



Governor Bob Taft

THREE NORTHEAST OHIO COUNTIES APPROVED FOR FEDERAL PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

COLUMBUS (August 15, 2006) – Governor Bob Taft announced today that President George W. Bush approved the request for three northeast Ohio counties to receive federal public assistance. With the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Public Assistance Program, qualified local and state governments and private non-profit organizations are able to apply for reimbursement for emergency debris removal, emergency protective measures and repairs to roads, bridges, water control facilities, public buildings and public utilities.

“Preliminary damage assessments for Ashtabula, Geauga and Lake counties totaled more than \$13 million in damage to public property and infrastructure,” said Taft. “I am pleased that President Bush has made this commitment to provide financial assistance to the local and state governments who worked long hours protecting lives and property during this disaster.”

Last Thursday, August 10, joint county, state and federal assessment teams completed their surveys of damaged infrastructure and response costs incurred in the counties of Ashtabula, Geauga and Lake. The findings of the teams were as follows:

<i>County</i>	<i>Public Damage Cost</i>
Ashtabula County	\$1,895,754
Gauga County	\$590,335
Lake County	\$11,122,482
<i>TOTAL:</i>	<i>\$13,733,453</i>

Representatives from both the Ohio Emergency Management Agency and FEMA will be meeting with local officials to further explain the public assistance application process.

Beginning on July 27, severe storms, straight-line winds and flooding were reported in northeast Ohio. On July 29, Governor Taft toured the impacted areas and made the announcement that he would request both preliminary damage assessment teams and a federal disaster declaration. On August 1, President Bush approved Governor Taft’s declaration request for assistance to individuals and businesses in Ashtabula, Geauga and Lake counties. Applications for federal and state disaster assistance may be made by calling FEMA's toll-free number **1-800-621-3362 (FEMA)** or TTY 1-800-462-7585 for the hearing impaired. Applications may also be submitted electronically at www.fema.gov.

###

Media Contacts: Mark Rickel, Governor’s Office, (614) 644-0957;
C.J. Couch, Ohio EMA, (614) 799-3695