

**NEWS RELEASE**



**Governor Bob Taft**

**TAFT ANNOUNCES DISASTER UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE**

*Eligibility for Unemployment Benefits to be Expanded*

COLUMBUS (July 7, 2006) - Governor Bob Taft today announced that Ohioans affected by substantial damage as a result of the severe storms and flooding in Cuyahoga, Erie, Huron, Lucas, Sandusky and Stark counties are eligible for disaster unemployment assistance through the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. The additional assistance follows President George W. Bush's July 2<sup>nd</sup> declaration of a federal disaster for the six counties.

"I thank the President for his quick response to our request and declaring a federal disaster for those six counties," Taft said. "In addition to the federal assistance that is available to those individuals and businesses affected by the storms, this declaration enables the state to also provide temporary income to workers who were laid-off or unable to work as a result of the disaster."

Eligibility for Unemployment Compensation is broadened under the Disaster Unemployment Assistance program to include people who, as a result of the disaster: no longer have a job; are unable to reach their place of employment; were to have started new employment but cannot; have become the major supporter for a household because the head of household died in the disaster; or cannot work because of injury. Self-employed individuals and farmers who are not covered by unemployment insurance may also be eligible for Disaster Unemployment Assistance benefits. Individuals who have exhausted unemployment eligibility may also qualify for these benefits.

Additionally, self-employed individuals and farmers who are not covered by unemployment insurance may be eligible for Disaster Unemployment Assistance benefits. Individuals who have exhausted regularly state unemployment eligibility may qualify for these benefits.

Applications for these benefits may be filed by calling the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services toll-free at 1-877-644-6562 (877-OHIO-JOB) from 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday - Friday. Applicants should be prepared to provide a Social Security number and driver license or state ID number and the names, addresses and telephone numbers of all employers within the last 18 months. Individuals in these counties must apply by August 1.

Individuals may also be eligible for other federal programs. Those in the counties designated for assistance to affected residents and business owners can begin the disaster application process by registering online at <http://www.fema.gov> or by calling 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or 1-800-462-7585 (TTY) for the hearing and speech impaired. The toll-free telephone numbers are available from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (local time) seven days a week until further notice. Applicants registering for aid should be prepared to provide basic information about themselves (name, permanent address, phone number), insurance coverage and any other information to help substantiate losses.

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Media Contact: Mark Rickel, Governor's Press Secretary, (614) 644-0957; Carmen Stewart, ODJFS Communications, (614) 466-6650.