



**RON DESANTIS**  
GOVERNOR

August 16, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
President of the United States  
The White House  
Washington, D.C.

Through: Gracia B. Szczech, Regional Administrator  
FEMA Region IV  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
3005 Chamblee–Tucker Road  
Atlanta, Georgia 30341

RE: Request for Emergency Declaration  
Tropical Cyclone Fred

Dear Mr. President:

Under the provisions of Section 501 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C §§5121-5207 (the “Stafford Act”), as implemented by 44 C.F.R. §206.35, I request that you declare an emergency for the State of Florida in anticipation of Tropical Cyclone Fred. This request is timely under 44 CFR §206.35(a). I submit this request in expectation of the impacts of Tropical Cyclone Fred, which as of the most recent National Weather Service forecast includes potential impacts to the Florida Panhandle and Big Bend. This request is in anticipation of the continued response, rescue, and recovery efforts necessary to save lives and to protect public health and safety.

Based upon current forecasts and modeling, I request an Emergency Declaration for Bay, Calhoun, Citrus, Dixie, Escambia, Franklin, Gadsden, Gilchrist, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Lafayette, Leon, Levy, Liberty, Manatee, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Taylor, Wakulla, Walton, and Washington Counties in the State of Florida. Specifically, I am requesting Public Assistance Category B (Emergency Protective Measures), limited to direct Federal assistance and reimbursement for mass care, including evacuation and sheltering support that are beyond the capability of State and affected tribal and/or local governments.

At 8:00 AM EDT on August 16, 2021, the National Hurricane Center reported that Tropical Cyclone Fred was located 90 miles south of Apalachicola. Fred is currently strengthening, and additional strengthening could occur to near or at hurricane strength this afternoon before it makes landfall. According to the National Hurricane Center forecast track, landfall is expected to be in Gulf or Bay County late this afternoon or evening as a strong tropical storm that is near hurricane strength. Tropical Cyclone Fred poses a risk of dangerous storm surge, heavy rainfall, flash flooding, strong damaging winds, hazardous seas, and the potential for isolated tornadic activity for much of the Florida Panhandle and Big Bend.

Tropical Storm Warnings are in effect for the Panhandle and Big Bend from Navarre to the Steinhatchee River, including inland locations such as Leon County. Warnings have been extended eastward this morning due to observations from the Hurricane Hunters that show tropical storm force winds extend out 115 miles from the center. A storm of this size and strength has the potential to produce tropical storm force winds and hurricane force gusts along portions of the Florida Panhandle today and tonight.

Storm Surge Warnings are in effect from Indian Pass to Yankeetown. Storm surge has already begun and will peak at high tide late this afternoon and evening from Indian Pass to Steinhatchee from 3-5 feet. 1-3 feet of surge is expected west of Indian Pass in the Panhandle and south of Yankeetown along the Nature Coast. High surf of 8-12 inches will cause beach erosion, due overwash, and result in dangerous beach conditions and rip currents.

Rainfall amounts of 4-8 inches, with isolated amounts of 12 inches, are forecast from the National Weather Service for much of the Panhandle and Big Bend today and Tuesday. Flash Flood Watches are in effect for the Panhandle and Big Bend until Tuesday evening. Rainfall amounts over the past two weeks have been above normal for this time of year across the majority of the state, with parts of the Big Bend and Nature Coast measuring 300-400% more rainfall than normal over the last two weeks. Due to the saturation level of the ground, a tropical system affecting this region of Florida could quickly create urban and riverine flooding conditions and cause trees to become more susceptible to downing from gusty winds. Many rivers in Northeast Florida and along the West Coast are already in flood stage, and any rainfall will worsen the ongoing flooding.

A Tornado Watch is in effect for parts of the Panhandle and Big Bend until 8 PM ET Monday. Additional watches could be issued tonight for similar regions, and spread further east into Northeast Florida. Isolated tornadoes will be possible in the outer rain bands near and east of where Fred makes landfall.

This event comes on the heels of the Surfside Building Collapse (EM 3560-FL) where life-saving resources and teams from all parts of Florida, including all eight of Florida's Urban Search and Rescue Teams, have been deployed outside of hurricane response efforts. The incident period for EM 3560-FL was just closed, with a total of 97 fatalities.

The preparation for Tropical Cyclone Fred follows five consecutive hurricane seasons in which the State has been impacted by multiple billion-dollar events. Every jurisdiction in the State of Florida has responded to and is currently recovering from at least three federally declared events in the past five years, with most actively recovering from four events.

In the 2017 hurricane season, the State of Florida received a Major Disaster Declaration for Hurricane Irma (DR 4337-FL), followed by Hurricane Nate (EM 3395-FL) shortly thereafter. Hurricane Irma was a category four hurricane that affected the entire state and resulted in the inclusion of all 67 counties in the Disaster Declaration. Following the Hurricane Nate declaration, Florida entered into a Host-State Agreement with FEMA to provide services to Hurricane Maria survivors from Puerto Rico. FEMA has since obligated almost \$2.6 billion in eligible costs to

jurisdictions to recover from Hurricane Irma; however, significant costs remain unobligated, to include emergency work.

In the historic 2018 hurricane season, the Florida Panhandle and Big Bend Area received a Major Disaster Declaration for Hurricane Michael (DR 4399-FL), a category five hurricane. State agencies expended over \$140.9 million in support of local jurisdictions and individual survivors. The FEMA Joint Field Office estimates that it will obligate over \$3.2 billion for this event, but only \$2 billion has been obligated thus far. In 2019, the State was declared for Hurricane Dorian (DR 4468-FL). While costs are still being formulated, the State estimates that the total obligated costs will be over \$181.3 million, with only \$66.7 million being obligated thus far.

For the COVID-19 Major Disaster Declaration (DR 4486-FL), statewide Public Assistance costs are approximately \$3.6 billion. The state had preliminarily estimated the total costs would be approximately \$1.4 billion. The current amount has far exceeded these original anticipated figures, with approximately \$2 billion obligated.

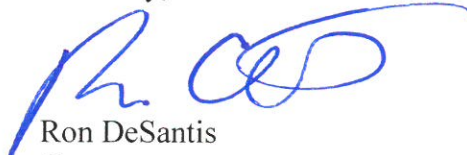
A Major Disaster, DR 4564-FL, was declared due to Hurricane Sally while the State of Florida was still responding to the pandemic. While still in the project development phase of this event, it is anticipated that obligations of eligible work will exceed \$184 million. The projected path of Tropical Cyclone Fred is set to directly impact this same geographical area.

On August 13, 2021, I issued Executive Order No. 21-190 which directed the State Coordinating Officer to execute the State's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan in support of the Executive Order in accordance with Section 501 of the Stafford Act.

Emergency protective measures required because of this event will require extraordinary efforts of state and local government for the continued response, rescue, and recovery efforts necessary to save lives and to protect property, public health and safety, or to lessen or avert the threat of a disaster. The threat posed by Tropical Cyclone Fred requires that timely precautions are taken to protect the communities, critical infrastructure, and general welfare of Florida.

I have designated Kevin Guthrie, Director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management, as the State Coordinating Officer for this emergency. He is authorized to provide any further information, assurances, requests, or justification on my behalf, as well as designate additional Deputy State Coordinating Officers as necessary.

Sincerely,



Ron DeSantis  
Governor

Enclosures:  
Executive Order 21-190  
FEMA Form 010-0-13