NORTH Dakota | Office of the Governor

Be Legendary.™

July 21, 2025

Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Through: Katherine Fox, Acting Regional Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
Region VIII
Denver Federal Center
Building 710, Box 25267
Denver, CO 80225-0267

RE: REQUEST FOR A PRESIDENTIAL MAJOR DISASTER DECLARATION

Dear Mr. President,

The great state of North Dakota experiences a vast variety of extreme weather conditions every year. Since 1953, North Dakota has received approval for 73 federal disaster declarations, 69 of which included damages from extreme weather events, and 11 of those were just in the past six years. This increased occurrence of extreme weather events, coupled with the severe storms and tornadoes that pushed through our state on June 20-21, 2025, has placed a heavy burden on State and local resources.

Starting late Friday, June 20, 2025, a severe summer storm system began moving into the state that included a unique storm pattern known as a derecho. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Storm Prediction Center, a derecho is a relatively rare event that creates a widespread, long-lived, extreme windstorm that is often described as an inland hurricane because of its overall strength. From Friday, June 20, through Saturday, June 21, this severe storm system spanned across the entirety of the Interstate 94 corridor that passes through the heart of North Dakota. This catastrophic storm system ultimately claimed four lives and resulted in devastating impacts to transportation systems, the agricultural industry, homes, businesses and public buildings. It also caused widespread power outages by destroying large swaths of electrical infrastructure and left behind enormous amounts of vegetative debris that needed to be cleaned up by local communities and volunteers. These conditions required the activation and exhaustion of all local resources and tested the state's capabilities to help respond to and recover from such a widespread and dangerous event.

We ask for your continued support as we recover from this devastating disaster event that has caused extensive damage across southern, central, and eastern North Dakota. Pursuant to Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§5121-5207 (Stafford Act), and implemented by 44 CFR §206.36, the State of North Dakota requests a major disaster declaration for the June 20- 21, 2025, severe summer storm, straight-line winds, and rare derecho event, to include the counties of Barnes, Burleigh, Cass, Eddy, Emmons, Foster, Grant, Griggs, Kidder, McLean, Morton, Oliver, Ransom, Sheridan, Sioux, Steele, Stutsman, Traill and Wells. These counties are identified in Attachment A, *Jurisdictions Impacted by the June 20-21, 2025, Severe Summer Storms,* and all recorded extensive damages as this storm system ripped across the state for two days producing over 20 confirmed tornadoes, up to baseball-size hail, damaging straight-line winds with measured wind gusts up to 111 mph and torrential rainfall that led to localized flash flooding.

Within the past three years alone, North Dakota has been approved for six presidential disasters in response to severe summer and winter weather events, to include wildfires, that were all exacerbated by extreme wind conditions. With this most recent disaster, I, Governor Armstrong, issued Executive Order 2025-05 which formally activated our State Emergency Operation Plan, mobilized all available state resources, and ensured a coordinated response to help our communities and their residents with the impacts of these deadly storms and the continuing threat posed by severe summer weather. But due to the size and intensity of this specific storm system, there were significant and unavoidable widespread damages that devastated communities and critical infrastructure across our state that require federal assistance, especially with recovery efforts, that extend beyond our state's capabilities to provide.

Weather Summary

At 2:33 p.m. CDT on Thursday, June 19, the National Weather Service (NWS) issued a severe thunderstorm briefing packet for much of North Dakota, highlighting the expected onset of severe thunderstorms that evening, and the likelihood that these storms would increase in intensity for Friday, June 20, and Saturday, June 21. The weather briefing packet included a warning of expected hazards to include large hail, damaging winds, and the potential for multiple tornadoes emphasizing the risk within the impact areas. The ND Watch Center issued a Critical Information Requirement (CIR) briefing in response to NWS forecasts, prompting increased monitoring throughout the state.

On June 20, a Severe Thunderstorm Watch was issued for parts of southwest and south-central North Dakota at 3:45 p.m. CDT as thunderstorms were developing in eastern Montana. According to the NWS, a low-pressure system in southeastern Montana and a warm front stretching eastward across North Dakota would provide fuel for severe thunderstorms; and several environmental parameters were in place for a significant outbreak of severe weather including abundant low-level moisture, strong low to mid-level wind shear, and approaching upper-level disturbance. Severe wind gusts around 60 mph were reported in southwest North Dakota from Dickinson to Bowman by 7 p.m. CDT. Thereafter, storms grew into a more pronounced line as they moved east and began accelerating.

At 7:50 p.m. CDT, a Tornado Watch was issued across most of central and eastern North Dakota through 3 a.m. CDT Saturday morning, given the potential for strong tornadoes to develop ahead and within the squall line, and with widespread damaging downburst wind gusting up to 105 mph. Automated weather observation sites soon began reporting extremely strong wind gusts, including a 94-mph gust at 8:17 p.m. CDT at the North Dakota Agricultural Weather Network (NDAWN) station 10 miles northwest of Elgin, as reported by the Bismarck NWS office.

Through the evening of June 20 and into the morning of June 21, 34 of North Dakota's 53 counties were impacted by extreme downburst winds, large hail, and fatal tornadoes resulting in widespread damage to homes, infrastructure and the environment. The NWS has classified this overall storm complex as a derecho, which encompasses the preceding tornadoes, the embedded tornadoes and the overall large-scale damage impacts throughout this weather episode. This derecho classification is a term reserved for the most intense, widespread and long-lasting lines of severe thunderstorms, according to the NWS. A storm must extend more than 400 miles in length and 60 miles in width and produce continuous damaging winds with at least three wind gust reports of 75 mph or greater.

Additionally, this complex of storms was so intense that it developed a trailing "mesoscale" area of low pressure that produced prolonged periods of hurricane-force winds sustained at 60 to 90 mph, with wind gusts measured up to 111 mph. As the NWS states, "this was a unique event due to the combination of the violent tornadoes ahead of the derecho, and the long duration of the significant winds that followed the derecho." These Category One hurricane-force winds mainly impacted southern, central and east-central North Dakota, east of Highway 83 and between Highway 200 and Interstate 94.

Incident Summary

By early evening on June 20, the ND Watch Center began receiving reports of widespread power outages with the largest outages being in the central and southeastern portions of the state. From Friday evening through the weekend and well into the following week, damage reports poured into the Watch Center. Key impacts included downed trees, damage to critical infrastructure and homes, impacts to agriculture, extensive power outages and four fatalities.

As the tornadoes, destructive winds and large hail moved through the state, residents recalled the intense sounds they could hear while sheltering. Barnes County Emergency Manager Jessica Jenrich stated, "It sounded like the whole town was being blown away." According to the Fargo Forum, residents in the community of Enderlin expressed thanks that their homes were intact and they were still alive. Grant Patterson, who rode out the storm in his basement, said, "One of the things I remember was the sound of wind … the wind was incredibly loud."

Due to these extreme, hurricane-force winds, there were roofs shredded, trees uprooted, power poles snapped and other widespread damages inflicted upon homes, businesses and critical infrastructure. Many residents were forced to dig themselves out of the rubble, only to be met with the devastating destruction surrounding their homes and communities. One Barnes County resident told the Associated Press (AP), "The storm sucked her bedroom window out of the wall,

blew the room's door off its hinges and ripped off part of the roof." Several homes were completely flattened and numerous others had crushed roofs or garages ripped from the main structure. Numerous agricultural outbuildings were damaged or destroyed with vehicles and trailers thrown and crumpled in distant fields. According to the American Red Cross (ARC), many homes in these impacted communities were severely damaged, power lines toppled, and families were forced to flee to community centers, fire halls and churches for safety and shelter.

Responders began working immediately in the late hours of the deadly storm, conducting welfare checks and searching for individuals who may have been trapped or injured amid the severe weather and multiple tornado touchdowns. Some communities experienced ravaging winds that lasted well over an hour, with responders out in the middle of the storm braving the dangerous weather conditions. Some communities also experienced supercell thunderstorms and strong to severe tornadoes ahead of the damaging downburst winds.

The most devastating tornado from this event was documented near the City of Enderlin which sits on the border between Ransom and Cass counties. This tornado was rated an EF-3 with peak winds near 160 mph. "The storm was still active when they (first responders) responded, and was very dangerous," Cass County Sheriff Jesse Jahner told reporters, according to ABC affiliate WDAY in Fargo. The Enderlin tornado carved a 12-mile path of devastation as it leveled multiple farmhouses and unfortunately led to three fatalities. It also damaged critical infrastructure, bent steel electrical transmission towers and crushed a cellular communications tower before finally dissipating. The acting Cass County Emergency Manager, Brady Scribner, shared, "In the area surrounding Enderlin, agricultural sites and farmsteads sustained significant damage including destroyed grain bins, irrigation systems and power lines." This was confirmed by state Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring, who described the impact as "tremendous" across rural communities. Many communication structures were damaged or destroyed, including public safety radio communications that were impacted in the cities of Page and Buffalo, both located in Cass County.

The Cass County Sheriff's Office reported the deaths of the three individuals in the community of Enderlin, and the Stutsman County Commission also reported the death of an individual in rural Courtenay who relied on a sleep machine that failed to operate due to power outages. With the storm moving through the area in the late evening, many residents, such as the four who passed away, were sleeping while the storm moved through the countryside. Many of the hardest hit homesteads were in deeply rural areas that do not have storm siren systems. These elements likely contributed to this tragic outcome.

According to NWS, additional tornadoes carved destructive paths through the rural Cass County area. One tornado initially damaged several power poles before shifting north where it reached a maximum width of 350 yards in an open field as confirmed by satellite imagery. It then veered northwest, directly striking a farmhouse and a grove of trees, where peak damage indicators estimated wind speeds around 120 mph. With over 20 confirmed tornadoes from this storm system, multiple jurisdictions across the state experienced similar damage and devastation.

These hostile winds and tornadic activities were accompanied by significant rainfall causing localized flooding. Floodwaters, along with floating and flying debris, created an additional hazard for first responders. A Wilton Ambulance driver (McLean County) reported to the NWS that there was flash flooding in the city streets with some areas knee deep. In Fargo, cars were stalled out in underpasses due to flash flooding that overwhelmed the local storm sewer systems. There were also reports of basements flooding and leaking roofs due to high wind impacts. In spite of these storm-related transportation complications, law enforcement, ambulance services and fire departments continued to respond to emergency calls involving individuals stuck in structures, damaged gas meters and flipped vehicles.

Furthermore, storm-damaged substations, power poles and transformers contributed to prolonged power outages that affected residential, commercial, and critical facilities. These outages also severely hampered emergency response and recovery operations within the impacted communities. At the height of the event, nearly 37,000 people and businesses were without power, with some rural outages lasting up to a week.

Stutsman County Emergency Manager Jessica Moser reported widespread power outages across her county, which prompted the use of generators at multiple public facilities including the Stutsman County Law Enforcement Center that temporarily served as an emergency shelter for displaced residents. In Cass County, the City of Page was without power for over six days, and a Cass County Emergency Management generator was used to power the city's Command Center used for emergency operations. A rented generator was also brought to power the Page Public School that was being used as an emergency shelter and feeding station. Additionally, a rented generator was provided for the community of Hunter for their emergency shelter. According to Scribner, "We needed generators not just for safety, but for survival."

The numerous tornadoes and derecho-scale winds also created extreme amounts of debris. Leaves, branches and full-sized trees littered sidewalks, roads, parks and residential yards, blocking access for emergency services and complicating cleanup efforts. Some downed trees were mature enough that their roots brought up the sidewalk around them. Jim Heidorn, Mayor of Page, told the AP that the wind ravaged trees, roofs and structures, stating, "Half of the town's trees are gone." Additionally, the city of Jamestown reported a loss of nearly 50% of its trees. That community also experienced major infrastructure issues, including damage to lift stations and the implementation of water usage restrictions.

In rural areas, agricultural debris, including damaged equipment, fencing, silos and metal sheeting, was scattered across fields and roadways. Homes and outbuildings that had been torn apart contributed hazardous materials to the landscape, such as household chemicals, insulation, sharp metal fragments and broken glass. Additionally, fuel, oil and other hazardous substances leaked from overturned tanks and storm-damaged structures, posing potential environmental and public health concerns. The presence of this wide range of debris required coordinated cleanup operations, including the safe handling of hazardous materials and specialized disposal efforts.

Transportation was also severely impacted as key roadways became impassable. Interstate 94 was briefly closed due to overturned semi-trucks and other vehicles which blocked lanes of traffic, prompting emergency response from the ND Highway Patrol (NDHP). Interstate 29 was also significantly impacted, with four semi-trucks overturned in a four-mile stretch, all due to the erratic, high winds. There were several overturned semis throughout the state, with one semi in Traill County containing hazardous materials that triggered a response from the ND Department of Environmental Quality (NDDEQ). Three train derailments occurred due to the high winds. One derailment happened near Enderlin (Cass/Ransom Counties) involving 12 empty train tanker cars. A second derailment took place near Galesburg (SW Traill County), with 3 miles of empty grain cars, nearly 300 units, that tumbled off the tracks. The third derailment occurred near Mayville (Traill County) and involved a 6- to 7-mile-long train hauling loaded grain cars that was pushed off the tracks, further demonstrating the severity of the storm.

Given the density of the agricultural industry across the state, cascading storms had a significant impact on both commercial and agricultural infrastructure. Powerful winds toppled both small and very large grain bins, with some bin sites completely destroyed. Outbuildings, including machine sheds essential for storing tools and equipment, were flattened or collapsed onto the equipment inside. Many grain elevators were also severely damaged or destroyed, creating uncertainty for producers ahead of the fall harvest. The speed and scale of recovery needs, combined with the well-intentioned but rapid response from local residents, quickly overwhelmed local systems, particularly in smaller communities with limited public works capacity and administrative resources.

A Whole of Government and Community Response

During the storm, the ND Watch Center actively monitored conditions, coordinated critical information, such as power outages, and disseminated timely updates through WebEOC and other communication channels. These efforts provided enhanced situational awareness for emergency managers and state partners. Watch officers supported local emergency managers and responders by proactively verifying and documenting updates, helping to alleviate the burden on local response efforts already operating at stretched capacity. The ND Department of Emergency Services (NDDES) – Division of State Radio and local dispatch centers handled an influx of calls and coordinated with first responder agencies. Local emergency managers stayed vigilant for reports of immediate needs and collected initial damage assessments from coordinating agencies.

On June 21, I declared a statewide disaster due to the severity of impacts, and activated the NDDES State Emergency Operations Plan (SEOP) managed by the NDDES – Division of Homeland Security (HLS). I also ordered that all state agencies and administrators activate and utilize their response and recovery resources and capabilities pursuant to the SEOP in order to assist local and tribal officials, alleviate hardships, facilitate restoration of services and infrastructure and implement mitigation measures where applicable. Due to the community impacts, emergency disaster declarations were also issued for the cities of Hunter, Page and Valley City, as well as for Barnes, Cass and Foster counties.

At the local level, citizens began removing debris in an effort to clear roadways and unveil other damage. Local emergency management agencies worked tirelessly to assess the damage to their communities, despite limited and stretched staffing. Their efforts were bolstered by a whole community response, with volunteers and private partners stepping in to assist wherever they were needed. Scribner stated, "We coordinated generator deliveries, command center support, debris removal and public information outreach, all while trying to track costs and needs in real time. We did everything we could, but we've hit our ceiling."

Cass County and City of Fargo communication teams boosted messaging from community leaders in Hunter, Page and Erie who were seeking volunteers. Cass County also hosted daily recovery meetings to share updates, identify needs, report damages and address ongoing impacts. Valley City High School (Barnes County) dispatched individuals around the community to compile debris for waste management and to collect it for disposal. One local business coordinated a group of roughly 100 volunteers to support the community of Enderlin. Community members donated water, electrolyte drinks, snacks and supplies to volunteers. Community public works staff and volunteers organized to support those impacted the most. The ND Forest Service (NDFS) activated five wildland firefighters with chainsaw certifications to help break down debris for removal in the Community of Hunter. Firefighters were focused on breaking down large trees to better manage safety concerns.

The ND Department of Transportation (NDDOT) monitored incident updates for road closures, worked with local district offices to assess damage, and provided manual labor support for debris removal. The NDDEQ worked with local landfill managers to ensure that appropriate procedures were followed for disposal and provided technical assistance for hazardous chemical spills.

North Dakota-based Rural Electric Cooperatives (RECs), Transmission Organizations, and Investor-Owned Utilities worked nonstop to perform emergency repairs and restore electricity to all impacted residents. Cass County Electric Cooperative reported via its Facebook page that it had a peak outage of 8,485 accounts without power, 163 poles damaged, with 34-line workers working 16-plus hour days. Current estimates from the nine impacted RECs that participated in the state's Preliminary Damage Assessment indicate 580 broken poles, along with associated pole hardware. Miles of downed and frayed power lines had to be replaced, with an estimated cost of $8.1 million from this singular disaster event. Additional damages were attributed to Private-For-Profit and Investor-Owned Utilities that impacted larger communities with extended power outages; however, those impacts would not be eligible under a disaster declaration and were not included in the Preliminary Damage Assessment.

The ND Department of Health and Human Services (NDHHS) activated its Department Operations Center (DOC), contacting health care facilities to understand where power outages existed. Following this outreach, NDHHS mobilized refrigerated trucks and generators to several long-term care facilities and one human service center across the state. NDHHS also activated the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP) to replace lost food caused by extended power outages for residents who rely on the traditional SNAP program as well.

Fargo Cass Public Health mobilized a generator to the Page Public School where the ARC established a respite shelter. ARC staff and volunteers activated the shelter, which provided warm showers, phone charging stations, snacks, water, emotional support and access to recovery resources, and also conducted damage assessments as requested. The organization also hosted a community meal at the Page Public School and navigated requests for short-term housing and financial assistance.

North Dakota Parks and Recreation (NDPR) reported damage to Beaver Lake and Fort Ransom State Parks. Turtle River State Park also conducted emergency sheltering for campers. There were reports of power loss at these parks as well.

The NWS provided critical technical support before, during and after the disaster, offering warnings and post-event analysis that supported response and recovery operations. NDDES- HLS coordinated with the Joint Information Center (JIC) to proactively share messaging with the public and dissemination of press releases. NDDES-HLS also compiled a listing of recovery resources for impacted citizens on the agency-managed website, NDResponse.gov, with categories such as immediate needs, financial recovery, agricultural resources, resources for well-being and resources for public officials. By visiting the NDResponse.gov website, impacted residents could find useful information on assistance from the ARC, tracking volunteers, financial donations and available programs for agricultural impacts.

Recovery staff within NDDES- HLS and the ARC also facilitated regional damage assessments of homes, public infrastructure and electrical distribution. NDDES- HLS also provided just-in-time training to emergency managers and participated in recovery coordination calls facilitated by Cass County.

North Dakota Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (NDVOAD) have also been a part of the recovery by providing resources for unmet needs such as supplying transportable waste management to areas of dense volunteerism and a transportable dumpster for the home of the Enderlin residents who perished during the storm.

The ND Community Foundation established a central location for the collection of monetary donations. These will be distributed back into local organizations that supported the emergency response or homeowners who need assistance with disaster recovery and unmet needs.

Agricultural support came through North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA). NDSU Extension also hosts an Ag Disaster Call that compiles damages from NDSU Extension agents, the ND Department of Agriculture, NDDES-HLS, NDAWN and several other state agencies. NDSU Extension also sent out damage assessment surveys, newsletters, mailings and social media, and issued press releases of relevant topics. USDA FSA offices worked to gather livestock impacts and crop damage data and activated appropriate programs dependent on activation criteria.

In an effort to reconcile valuable personal items and understand magnitude, Enderlin residents worked with their local emergency managers to call upon drone operators to search impacted areas. Teams from the Northern Plains Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Test Site used drones to search for lost items such as missing saddles, generators, utility vehicles, a horse trailer and pickup trucks that vanished into the storm. Drone teams can deploy within 10 minutes and can fly over hard-to-access areas such as swamps and creeks. Teams are also giving farmers insights into items in fields that will need to be removed before harvest.

A few days later, staff from the ND Governor's Office and I, joined by the Adjutant General of the ND National Guard and Director of NDDES- HLS, surveyed damaged areas and thanked local leaders, first responders and volunteers who helped with cleanup. The power of collaboration paves the long road of recovery ahead, but we are well on our way.

Despite limited capabilities and strained resources, responders acted swiftly and decisively to protect lives, safeguard one another and confront the devastating impacts of the June 20–21 storms. Their efforts reflect a deep commitment to community safety and resilience, doing all they could under challenging conditions to stabilize operations and support recovery in the face of widespread destruction.

Long-term Implications of Recent Disasters

Since 2019, the State of North Dakota has received approvals for 11 Major Disaster Declarations related to severe weather events and floods, as well as two Fire Management Assistance Grants (FMAGs) that were both approved in late 2024. These combined disaster events have continuously depleted local and state resources. After the recovery efforts from one disaster are completed, another severe weather event impacts the state and causes further damage.

One of the largest recent disasters that impacted North Dakota was the 2022 severe winter storm and flood event that was declared as DR-4660. That disaster event included 40 of the 53 counties in the State of North Dakota and totaled $88.5 million in eligible Public Assistance-related costs. That amount, however, does not include costs for agricultural, private property, or business-related damages, so the actual cost for that disaster is significantly higher than what was approved through the Public Assistance program. Many of our local applicants are still working to repair damages caused by DR-4660 because of the short North Dakota construction season, and because they have financial difficulties paying for the local share of their disaster costs with their extremely small tax base. DR-4660 has been the largest disaster event for the State of North Dakota since the catastrophic 2011 flood event (DR-1981) which took nearly 10 years to close, but there have also been four additional Major Disaster Declarations that have impacted the state since DR-4660 was declared that further exacerbated local impacts from disasters as well.

Comparatively, while DR-4660 had more widespread damages, this June 20-21, 2025, storm system has disproportionately impacted rural North Dakotans while significantly straining local recovery efforts. Without federal support for long-term recovery and repairs, this event will

create a significant financial burden on rural ND communities, individual taxpayers and rural customers of disaster-impacted utilities.

The State of North Dakota does have a Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) that assists with emergency operation costs and to cover the state cost share of disaster related response, recovery and mitigation activities. Costs from previous disasters are projected to reduce the state's DRF to approximately $11.5 million for the 2025-2027 biennium, without accounting for any costs of the most recent storms. This June 20-21 disaster event would wipe out any remaining DRF funds and leave nothing for the remainder of the current biennium for emergency response operations or state cost share requirements.

Additionally, REC damages from this event are currently estimated to be $8.1 million but will possibly be more once all disaster costs are finalized. According to the ND Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDaREC), North Dakota RECs are Private Non-Profit Organizations which means that to cover the costs of disaster repairs to their infrastructure, they are required to either raise their monthly rates or add storm recovery fees to their service areas because they do not generate revenue otherwise. Without raising rates or adding fees, the REC would not be able to repair their storm damages and would likely go bankrupt. Furthermore, many of the areas serviced by RECs in North Dakota are considered frontier, meaning they contain fewer than six people per square mile, so increasing service fees to address disaster damages would fall on a significantly small, rural population. According to research conducted by the NDaREC, the average cost that would be charged to a rural resident served by an REC, in order to pay for $1 million worth of storm damages/repairs, would range between $25 to $75 per month until the costs have been recouped over time. Looking back at a 2010 severe ice storm, the Mor-Gran-Sou REC (which was also part of this June 20-21, 2025, storm event) was required to charge a storm recovery fee to its service area for 10 years until their costs were recouped, and that was with the financial assistance they received from FEMA under the Public Assistance Program. Without financial assistance, these rural property owners will be disproportionately impacted for the foreseeable future to address this storm's damages.

Many North Dakota farmers and ranchers also suffered significant losses over the duration of this storm. Crops, livestock, corrals, irrigation systems, equipment, grain handling systems, grain bins and buildings are just some of the losses that these producers suffered. Grain bins that held the 2024 harvest were destroyed, with Goehring noting, "The biggest issue is going to be harvest. We've probably had somewhere between 50 to 80 million bushels of capacity wrecked, grain bins that are twisted, collapsed." These grain management systems take years to fully establish and hold valuable commodities to feed livestock or to sell to businesses and grain elevators. Jenrich, the Barnes County emergency manager, who comes from a lineage of North Dakota farmers, shared that her family's farming production was also impacted, noting it "took years to get it [grain storage] that way, now it's to the point, do we start over?"

Grain elevators are a critical business for many small agriculturally based communities; their main purpose is to collect grain from individual farmers to combine into larger, more marketable lots. This collection and distribution of grain supports and provides stabilization to

the local economy. Many grain elevators throughout the state were impacted, and some were even destroyed such as in Hunter.

Additionally, high winds and heavy rain ripped soybeans, dry beans, edible beans and other crops right out of the ground, leaving hundreds to thousands of acres in need of reseeding. Fields that had already begun to emerge were stripped bare, forcing producers to quickly assess damage and make difficult decisions about replanting within tight growing windows and rising input costs. Some producers reported significant losses in dry and edible bean populations, contributing to long-term impacts that will likely take years to fully recover from.

To help address these agricultural impacts, the Governor's Office, ND Department of Agriculture and Bank of North Dakota developed a Grain Storage and Facility Rebuilders program that can provide low-interest loans to impacted farm and ranch owners to rebuild destroyed infrastructure on their properties. There are also some programs available through the USDA-FSA for livestock mortality, financial donations available through the ND Community Foundation, and assistance with hay hauling, livestock feeding and planting through Farm Rescue. If this declaration is approved, the additional programs that would become available from the USDA- FSA and Small Business Administration (SBA) would be instrumental in providing additional resources and financial assistance to the impacted farmers and ranchers of North Dakota as well.

The tree coverage for the impacted areas will also take decades to recover. Groves of trees known as shelterbelts that are used to protect homes and soil from wind were extensively damaged, which may lead to more soil erosion during summer months and more severe snow drifts as open areas increase. Excess stormwater runoff may also overwhelm drainage systems as rainfall cannot be intercepted by the tree canopy. Clean-up efforts will be long-lasting due to the severity and extensive amounts of debris to remove across the state.

Commitment to Resilience

NDDES-HLS maintains and prioritizes a commitment to resilience through the life cycle of the SEOP, which includes the ND Enhanced Mitigation Mission Area Operations Plan (MAOP). The plan outlines the state's close partnerships and wide outreach to stakeholders showcasing a whole of community and whole of government approach to mitigating disaster impacts. In addition to holding and maintaining an enhanced status plan, ND is also approved for all delegated authorities under the Program Administered by State (PAS) pilot program. These authorities allow NDDES-HLS to approve project applications, Benefit Cost Analyses (BCAs) and local hazard mitigation plans without direct federal oversight. PAS status further allows the state to be closely involved in all processes related to mitigation and recovery, creating an adaptable and innovative space for implementing pre- and post-disaster mitigation programs across the entire State of North Dakota.

North Dakota continues to be a leader in mitigation. Since 1997, North Dakota has implemented 522 mitigation projects with a total of $320,531,698 spent on mitigation within the state. Pew Charitable trusts and the National Institute of Building Science identified in 2018 that the use of

effective mitigation projects, such as those used in North Dakota, can save $6.54 in long-term response and recovery costs for every $1 invested. Using that average, these projects bring the state into the highest category of savings in the country with a total of $2,096,277,306 saved in response and recovery costs to date.

Many of the projects completed through the ND Hazard Mitigation program are funded by the disaster-based Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). North Dakota holds Enhanced Mitigation Plan Status which provides an additional 5% of the total dollar amount of a declared disaster to be used specifically toward completing mitigation projects in the state. The HMGP program has funded numerous generators, storm shelters, flood protection projects, planning efforts and early warning sirens across the state. In fact, one of the most recent mitigation initiatives funded through this program was assisting towns and cities across the state with the purchase and installation of 26 generators for critical facilities within their communities. The project was funded using HMGP funds unlocked from DR-4444, which was granted for disaster costs associated with flooding in October 2019. The Stutsman County Law Enforcement Center utilized one of these recently installed generators during the June 20-21 event to keep the power on for the dispatch center and to shelter displaced people due to the storm. The State of North Dakota is continuing to identify critical facilities that need backup generators so we can keep increasing community resilience, prevent losses of essential utilities such as water and wastewater, and prevent impacts to lifesaving services such as police and fire departments. The continuation of funding for the HMGP is critical so the state can continue prioritizing mitigation activities and increase community resilience in the face of future disaster events.

Conclusion

Pursuant to 44 CFR§206.36, I have determined that the severe summer storms, straight line winds, and derecho event that occurred from June 20, 2025, to June 21, 2025, were of such severity and magnitude that effective response and recovery are beyond the capabilities of the state and affected local jurisdictions.

For the reasons described in this letter and its supporting documentation, I respectfully request that you declare a major disaster for the State of North Dakota with an incident period of June 20, 2025, to June 21, 2025, for Barnes, Burleigh, Cass, Eddy, Emmons, Foster, Grant, Griggs, Kidder, McLean, Morton, Oliver, Ransom, Sheridan, Sioux, Steele, Stutsman, Traill and Wells counties. Damages also were identified in the counties of Mercer, Nelson and Richland counties, however, they did not exceed their per capita threshold to be included as a designated county. The current estimated costs for this disaster event are expected to exceed $11.7 million, of which $11.455 million in damages have already been validated by FEMA Region VIII as part of our Preliminary Damage Assessment. With our current state per capita threshold being $1,472,488, the estimated cost for this event is approximately eight times more than our current threshold.

As in previous disasters, I am requesting North Dakota be designated as a Public Assistance Managing State. By performing State Led Public Assistance, the State of North Dakota will efficiently implement the Public Assistance program on behalf of our communities while also keeping the overall costs for managing this disaster as low as possible. Additionally, I am also

requesting that the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program be implemented on a statewide basis. Since our state maintains both Enhanced Mitigation Plan Status and PAS Status, I know our state will effectively use any available mitigation dollars to increase our state's resilience against future disaster events. I further certify for this major disaster that the state and local governments will assume all applicable non-federal shares of costs required by the Stafford Act 93-288.

We have designated Brigadier General Mitchell Johnson and Homeland Security Director Darin Hanson as the State Coordinating Officers (SCOs) for this request. They will work with FEMA to coordinate damage assessments and may provide further information or justifications on my behalf.

Thank you for your consideration of my request for a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration for the State of North Dakota and for your continued support as we recover from continuous disaster conditions.

Sincerely,

Kelly Armstrong
Governor

Enclosures: Enclosure A: Request for Presidential Major Disaster Declaration
Enclosure B: Preliminary Damage Assessment Findings

Attachment A: Jurisdictions Impacted by the June 20-21, 2025, Severe Storms, Stright-Line Winds, and Tornadoes
Attachment B: NWS Summary of June 20-21, 2025, Weather Event
Attachment C: State Climatologist Report of June 20-21, 2025, Storms
Attachment D: ND Presidential Declarations Map (1993-2025)

CC: U.S. Senator John Hoeven
U.S. Senator Kevin Cramer
U.S. Representative Julie Fedorchak
Brig. Gen. Mitchell R. Johnson, Director, North Dakota Department of Emergency Services
Darin Hanson, Director, North Dakota Division of Homeland Security
Justin Messner, Disaster Recovery Chief, North Dakota Division of Homeland Security