



TERRY E. BRANSTAD
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

KIM REYNOLDS
LT. GOVERNOR

April 26, 2011

Alfred E. Judd, Center Director
U.S. Small Business Administration
Office of Disaster Assistance Field Operations
Center West 6501 Sylvan Rd.
Curtis Heights, CA 95610

Dear Mr. Judd:

This letter is a formal request for a Small Business Administration (HSBA) Physical Disaster Declaration under the provisions of Section 501(a) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act for Monona and Pocahontas Counties due to a tornado that devastated at least 352 homes and businesses from April 9-10, 2011. The Disaster Loan Program allows for low interest loans to be made available for the victims of a disaster with physical damage to at least 25 homes and/or businesses in a county, and with damage to each home business equaling 40% or more of the estimated fair replacement value or pre-disaster fair market value, whichever is lower. *See 13 C.F.R. § 123.*

I am requesting this Declaration as a result of a severe weather system that produced tornadoes, high winds, heavy rain, large hail, and thunderstorms beginning on April 9-10, 2011. The first tornado touched down in Mapleton, Monona County, at 7:20 p.m. The National Weather Service categorized this tornado as an EF3 on the Fujita scale with winds of approximately 145-150 miles per hour. This storm system lasted until 10:30 that evening ending in Kossuth County as it dropped as many as four EF3 tornadoes along the way. This devastating storm that last more than three hours and for more than 100 miles left dozens of families homeless and damages to our agricultural community in the tens of millions. The United States Department of Agriculture, National Agriculture Statistics Service is reporting that, at the time of this letter, only 3% of Iowa's corn crop has been planted due to the unusually wet conditions. The long-term historical average is 23%. This late planting will only cause additional stress to these counties as they attempt to recover from this disaster.

On April 18-19, 2011, state, and local officials conducted joint preliminary damage assessments with representatives from SBA and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The joint teams identified at least 352 homes and businesses damaged sufficiently to meet the SBA criteria for a declaration. In the City of Mapleton (Monona County), the assessment team surveyed 226 homes, 57 percent of which were uninsured. In addition, 52 percent of the owners of those homes were classified as low income. This will greatly impact the ability of the citizens of this county to recover financially.

Pocahontas County received significant damage as a result of a large, multi-vortex tornado. High winds in excess of 160 mph destroyed nearly a dozen homes and a private grain elevator. Medical crews from the cities of Fonda and Storm Lake were mobilized to the town of Varina to assist in rescue operations. Fonda paramedics and Varina town officials conducted door-to-door surveys of the town to assess and respond to the medical needs of the residents. Several residents were treated on-scene for minor injuries and two residents, one young boy and one elderly woman, required in-patient treatment and were transported to medical facilities in Fonda and Storm Lake. The young boy was transported by a neighboring family as the medical response crews were delayed by roadway debris. The elderly woman had to be physically dug out of her basement by responders due to massive amounts of tornado-born debris. Due to the rural nature of the town of Varina, the loss of so many homes will have a severe impact on the sustainability and thereby the very existence of such a small community. The economic impact to the entire county, given its agricultural nature, will prove to be crippling with the loss of livestock buildings, grain bins and farm equipment, as well as the large amounts of wind driven debris in farm field causing a delay in planting operations.

The agricultural impact is severe for this area. Tornadoes and straight line winds damaged and destroyed farm dwellings, outbuildings, equipment and livestock. The United States Department of Agriculture forwarded me Loss Assessment Reports that provided a full picture of the damages experienced by agricultural producers. These reports indicate a loss of approximately \$78,600,000 to farm dwellings, outbuildings, equipment, and livestock.

As a direct result of the damage caused by these storms, I have taken appropriate actions under State law and directed the execution of the Iowa Emergency Response Plan on April 9, 2011 in accordance with Section 401 of the Stafford Act. Additionally, a State of Iowa Proclamation of Disaster Emergency was issued on April 9, 2011 for Monona County and a subsequent Proclamation was issued

for Pocahontas County on April 10, 2011. Additionally, a State of Iowa Proclamation of Disaster Emergency was issued on April 20, activating Iowa Individual Assistance Grant Program for Buena Vista, Monona, Pocahontas, and Sac Counties. This proclamation was requested from the county emergency management coordinators following the joint Federal, State, and local Preliminary Damage Assessments.

At this time, these counties have as many as six open federally declared disasters. This includes the floods of 2008 which was the largest disaster Iowa has ever experienced. While great progress has been made in the recovery of individuals and local governments, this latest round of damage only serves to cause additional stress on not only those impacted but those aiding in the recovery, further straining state resources.

Due to the magnitude of the incident, meeting the many short and long-term needs of the victims of this disaster is beyond the local and state capability.

It is vitally important that government at the local, state and federal level work together to provide the resources necessary for the victims to recover from this event.

I have determined there are at least 352 homes and/or businesses affected by this tornado incident. As a result I am requesting that SBA consider a Physical Disaster Declaration for Monona and Pocahontas Counties.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Terry E. Branstad". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent loop at the end of the last name.

Terry E. Branstad
Governor