The State of Wisconsin

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE ORDER # 40

Relating to a Declaration of a State of Emergency for Recurring Straight-Line Wind and Rain Storms in Northwestern Wisconsin

WHEREAS, recurring and historic straight line winds in excess of 100 mph and associated torrential rainfall of 7 inches on July 1, July 19, and August 1, 2011 devastated approximately 130,000 heavily wooded rural acres in Burnett, Douglas,, and Washburn counties resulting in downed timber now in the right of ways and on other public and private lands; and

WHEREAS, the volume of this "blow down" timber is estimated to be between 1 to 2 million cords of various grades and utility of timber, which is of a scale and magnitude that has not been experienced in Wisconsin since 1977, and

WHEREAS, following this succession of ravaging winds and storms, public roads were repeatedly impassible with downed timber, debris, and power lines; and

WHEREAS, although blown down timber has been removed from the travelled portion of the roads, the right of ways of 50 miles of county roads and 344 miles of township roads are heavily strewn with wood debris and massive piles of downed timber that is negatively impacting these critical road systems and infrastructure and threatens life, health, and property by creating significant hazards to motorists and creating an imminent threat for the upcoming winter by precluding winter snow removal by local units of government; and

WHEREAS, even without the recent severe straight-line wind storms, the affected area is the highest risk of catastrophic forest fire in the state, "Fire Landscape 15," and if timber is left unsalvaged, the combination of between 1 to 2 million cords of dry fuel loads in 2012 along with the highest level of forest fire risk in the state represents the threat of a severe natural occurrence to life, health, property, infrastructure, and the environment; and

WHEREAS, in addition to a significantly increased risk of fire, if the timber is left unsalvaged, it will become infested with a host of insects and diseases that threaten the property and environment of the citizens of the state; and

WHEREAS, the quality and value of the blown down timber will continue to degrade the longer it remains on the landscape depending on the type and quality of species and intended future use; and

WHEREAS, the timber products industry in Wisconsin uses 2.2 million cords of pulpwood and aproximately 3 million board feet of saw timber annually, and therefore, the 1 to 2 million cords in volume of wood that has been affected by this severe straight line wind storm represents more saw timber than is currently being used annually, and about 50-100% of the total annual pulpwood consumption for the entire state; and

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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

WHEREAS, countless efforts clearing fallen timber and debris from public roads and the mounting challenge of addressing the fallen timber on public and private lands in these counties has thoroughly exhausted and overwhelmed local resources and funds; and

WHEREAS, the timing of these events is extremely problematic with the impending fire season, the immediate problems associated with leaving the timber on the ground, and the need for snowplowing operations in the public rights of ways as early as October 2011; and

NOW THEREFORE, I, Scott Walker Governor of the State of Wisconsin, by the authority vested in me by the constitution and the laws of this state, and specifically by Wis. Stat. § 321.39(1)(a) and 323.10 of the Wisconsin Statutes, do hereby:

1) Proclaim that a State of Emergency exists in Burnett, Douglas, and Washburn Counties, and

2) Direct all state agencies of the State of Wisconsin to assist the above referenced counties as appropriate in this recovery effort; and

3) Specifically direct the Departments of Natural Resources, Military Affairs, Revenue, Transportation, Tourism, and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation to identify a point person within the respective department and evaluate the current situation and actively propose and pursue solutions and assistance; and

4) Direct the Department of Natural Resources to be the lead agency; and

5) Direct all relevant state agencies to submit in writing to the Office of the Governor any necessary suspension of administrative rules pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 323.12(4)(d); and

6) On behalf of the Counties of Burnett and Douglas request and support Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) program engineer assistance to the Wisconsin National Guard to take necessary actions to undertake, direct and complete any U.S. Department of Defense approved project, as appropriate. The U.S. Department of Defense maintains Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) programs with a purpose to improve military readiness while simultaneously providing services to stricken communities. The IRT program leverages military occupational training opportunities to benefit both the National Guard and supports the needs of their home communities; and

7) In the alternative, if the IRT request is denied or cannot complete the mission, call to state active duty such elements of the Wisconsin National Guard as the Adjutant General deems necessary after consultation with the Office of the Governor in order to assist civil authorities in recovery efforts as well as providing security and other essential services; and

8) Authorize the Adjutant General to utilize personnel called to state active duty pursuant to this order in emergency status.

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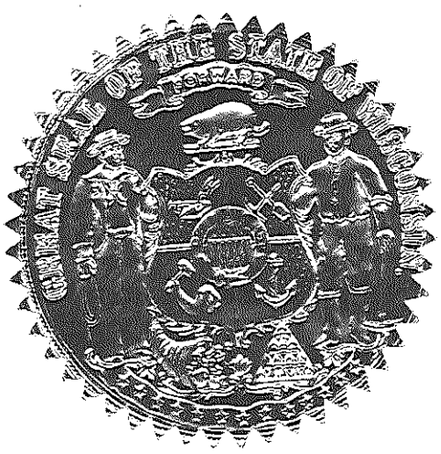
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR



IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great seal of the State of Wisconsin to be affixed. Done at the Capitol in the City of Madison this 23rd day of August in the year 2011.

SCOTT WALKER

Governor

By the Governor:

DOUGLAS LA FOLLETTE

Secretary of State