

BERRIEN COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
DIVISION OF BERRIEN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
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CHAIRMAN
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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CAPT. ROCKEY ADAMS
COORDINATOR

PROCLAMATION OF LOCAL STATE OF EMERGENCY

To: The Honorable Rick Snyder, Governor, State of Michigan;
Commanding Officer - Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division
(EMHSD), Department of State Police;
Michigan State Police EMHSD 5th District Coordinator;
Michigan State Police Post 53 Commander.

CC: Michigan State Police

From: County of Berrien Board of Commissioners;
Berrien County Emergency Operations Center

Subject: Local State of Emergency Declaration

WHEREAS, on and before Feb 20, 2018 the County of Berrien and much of the Saint Joseph River Drainage Basin within the Midwest Region of the United States experienced heavy rainfall amounts that extended into Feb 21, 2018. The rainfall event also melted existing snowfall that covered portions of the County of Berrien during the event.

WHEREAS, the rainfall event described above caused the Saint Joseph River, the Paw Paw River, the Galien River, and all of their connecting tributaries, creeks, and streams to flood within the County of Berrien. The Saint Joseph River entered the National Weather Service classification for Major Flooding on Feb 21 and reached its highest level of 17.33 feet on Feb 22; to which record level recorded is 15.1 feet. This flooding has caused the County of Berrien and the Cities, Villages, and Townships therein, to suffer widespread, or severe damage, injury, or loss of property. This is to include damage to various residences, businesses, other structures; roads, culverts, utility infrastructure, bridges, and government service infrastructures.

FURTHERMORE, There is additional rain in the forecast which has caused the river forecast to predict major flooding levels until Feb 25. All three major operating hydroelectric dams in Berrien County have opened their gates fully and diverted the river into spillway areas to attempt to protect the structure integrity; causing them to declare non-failure emergencies. A non-operating dam (Pucker Street Dam, City of Niles) is also being monitored and in non-failure emergency classification. Many bridges have been closed as water has impacted their beam structures; and damage will have to be assessed when the water subsides.

FURTHERMORE, There are many road closures; approximately 90, that are still in effect due to water over the road, culvert damage, probably bridge damage, or subsidence. Many well/septic systems have been inundated with flood waters. Approximately 500 family units have been formally evacuated and many others have self-evacuated from the Niles Township

surrounding area. Approximately 50 water rescue events have been conducted by Public Safety Responders. Responders have recovered large residential propane cylinders (i.e. 250 lb.) found floating in the river system. The former operating Animal Control Shelter has been reopened to care for displaced pets and is near capacity. One shelter is currently open in Berrien Springs housing approximately 50 evacuees. Wastewater systems are reported to have uncontrolled releases into the river system. Many natural gas lines have been turned off in anticipation of damage and are underwater. Many ground electrical transformers have caused controlled power outages to evacuated neighborhoods. Many structures have been inundated with flood waters and remain impacted. Many jurisdictions have expended funds that have or will reasonably exceed budgeted contingency funds or operating expenses.

WHEREAS, local municipalities reported continuing major impacts consistent with the impacts outlined above:

- Niles Charter Township
- City of Niles
- Buchanan Township
- City of Buchanan
- Chikaming Township; including Habert, Sawyer, Lakeside, and Union Pier
- Berrien Township
- Oronoko Township
- Berrien Springs Village
- New Buffalo Township
- Sodus Township
- Royalton Township

WHEREAS all other Berrien County municipal governments have reported minor flooding impacts; however, they are still assessing their resource stance and damage.

WHEREAS, specific impacts to all of Berrien Counties local jurisdictions have been outlined using the Michigan Critical Incident Management System (MiCIMS) and will continue to be updated as conditions change.

WHEREAS, the City of Niles maintains a valid local support emergency operations plan and has enacted that plan fully and properly. The City of Niles has declared a State of Emergency per their plan and has requested Berrien County support to cope with the emergency;

WHEREAS, the Niles Charter Township maintains a valid local support emergency operations plan and has enacted that plan fully and properly. The Niles Charter Township has coordinated efforts with Berrien County to cope with the emergency;

WHEREAS, the Chief Elected Official of the Berrien County Board of Commissioners has determined that extraordinary measures must be taken to alleviate the suffering of the people and to protect or rehabilitate property.

WHEREAS, the response and recovery aspects of the Berrien County Emergency Operations Plan have been activated, and local resources are being utilized to the fullest extent practical. Despite these efforts, local resources are not or are reasonably projected not to be sufficient to cope with this emergency.

WHEREAS, the Chief Elected Official has appointed and empowered the Sheriff of Berrien County, L. Paul Bailey and the Emergency Management Coordinator, Capt. Rockey J. Adams to coordinate disaster relief forces of Berrien County, request resources from the State of Michigan, and serve as the liaison in coordination with State and Federal authorities for assistance related to this emergency.

WHEREAS, the following actions or resources are respectfully requested as part of this declaration of the State of Michigan:

- The State of Michigan declare a State of Emergency and/or make available all State agency resources as requested and deemed reasonable throughout this emergency;
- The State of Michigan consider declaring a State of Disaster related to the widespread impacts of the flooding conditions;
- The State of Michigan provide subject matter experts to inspect and/or assist in the repair of bridges, public drains, dams, culverts, and critical infrastructures where appropriate and as requested throughout this emergency;
- The State of Michigan Provide Public and Environmental Health support in determining Public Health Hazards created by the flooding event;
- The State of Michigan provide assistance in conducting rapid and preliminary damage assessments in impacted areas when flood waters recede to safe levels for inspections to occur;
- The State of Michigan assist in determining when it is safe to perform a damage assessment and provide 3 days from that time determined to submit damage assessment data to the Department of State Police; Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division;
- The State of Michigan provide public and individual assistance support where found appropriate after a proper damage assessment shows it is appropriate;
- The State of Michigan make available mitigation specialists to assist in efficient recovery plans that may allow the impacted areas to rebuild in a way that may make them more disaster resilient in future events;
- The State of Michigan, if conditions warrant, petition the President of the United States of America for assistance as generally outlined under the Public Law 93-288, as amended, and request Federal assistance with appropriate disaster connected programs that may not require a Federal Declaration of an Emergency; such as USDA or Small Business Administration loan programs.

WHEREAS, the County of Berrien understands a proper damage assessment report, as outlined in the State of Michigan Damage Assessment Handbook, will be conducted and this request will not be acted upon in whole without sufficient data to support the need for assistance;

NOW, THEREFORE, as the Chairman of the County Board of Commissioners of Berrien County, in accordance with Section 10 of Act 390, P.A. 1976, as amended, I do hereby proclaim that a "state of emergency" exists in Berrien County, that the response and recovery aspects of the emergency operations plan have been activated, and that local resources are being utilized to the fullest extent practicable.

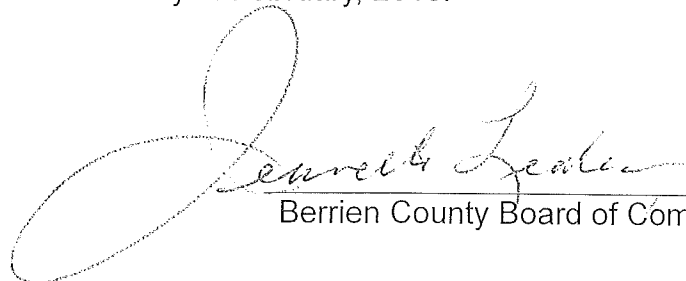
FURTHERMORE, this Local State of Emergency shall continue for a period of not more than seven days from the date of this proclamation unless continued or renewed by the Berrien County Board of Commissioners.

FURTHERMORE, this declaration of a local state of emergency shall be promptly disseminated to local media providers by the Berrien County Public Information Officer through press release and shall be filed promptly with the Michigan State Police Emergency Management Division and the Berrien County Clerk by the Emergency Management Coordinator.

FURTHERMORE, this declaration of a local state of emergency activates the Berrien County Emergency Operations Plan, and the Berrien County Emergency Operations Center, if not already done so. This includes the coordination, control, and utilization of local jurisdictional disaster relief forces and operations under the principals of the National Incident Management System.

FURTHERMORE, this declaration shall take effect immediately from and after its issuance.

ORDERED this 24th day of February, 2018.


Chair,
Berrien County Board of Commissioners