

FEMA denies State's appeal for flood assistance to local governments

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Denial ends process for seeking federal assistance

SPRINGFIELD – The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) today denied the state's appeal for federal assistance to help local governments in several counties recover from severe flooding and storms in late December and early January.

“The process is supposed to take into account a multitude of factors, but this denial demonstrates that only the numbers really matter,” said James K. Joseph, director of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA). “States with high populations concentrated in urban areas, such as we have in northeastern Illinois, often struggle to reach their thresholds, particularly when the impacts are in rural, sparsely populated areas of the state. Once again our poorest communities continue to suffer because of this unfair process.”

Illinois’ threshold for federal public assistance is \$18.1 million, which is based on the state’s population of \$12.8 million multiplied by \$1.41.

On April 8, the state submitted an appeal of FEMA’s earlier denial of assistance to help local governments recoup some of their flood-related expenses. The appeal outlined nearly \$16.8 million in local government costs and spelled out additional factors that justify Illinois’ request for federal assistance for local governments in Alexander, Bureau, Calhoun, Cass, Clark, Cumberland, Jackson, Jersey, Madison, Menard, Monroe, Morgan, Moultrie, Pike, Randolph, St. Clair and Vermilion counties.

Joseph pointed to severe localized impacts that should have been considered, such as in Alexander County where local government expenses totaled more than \$4 million. That equates to more than \$486 for every person living in the county.

Under federal rules, the state cannot submit another appeal for federal assistance.