



THE OFFICE OF
GOVERNOR MAURA T. HEALEY

LT. GOVERNOR KIMBERLEY DRISCOLL

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Healey-Driscoll Administration Requests Major Disaster Declaration Following February Blizzard

If granted, the declaration would secure federal assistance for state agencies and local governments in Barnstable, Bristol, Dukes, Nantucket, Norfolk and Plymouth counties

FRAMINGHAM – Governor Maura Healey has requested a Major Disaster Declaration to support communities impacted by the February 22-23, 2026, blizzard, which brought whiteout conditions, record snowfall and hurricane-force wind gusts to much of eastern Massachusetts. If granted, this declaration would help reimburse state agencies and local governments in several counties for eligible snow removal and storm-related costs.

The declaration request specifically seeks access to federal assistance programs for Barnstable, Bristol, Dukes, Nantucket, Norfolk and Plymouth counties, each of which reported storm-related expenses that exceeded the federal thresholds for assistance through Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) [Public Assistance Program](#). In addition, Barnstable, Bristol, Norfolk, and Plymouth counties may qualify for additional snow assistance after meeting or nearing record historical one-day snowfall totals maintained by the National Climatic Data Center.

“I saw first-hand the devastating impacts this record-breaking blizzard had on communities across Massachusetts, especially in the southeast,” said **Governor Maura Healey**. “First responders and local crews worked around the clock to dig out residents, keep roads open, and protect public safety. Those efforts were extraordinary but came at a significant cost to communities. We are requesting federal assistance to help our cities and towns recover and make sure they have access every available resource to support recovery moving forward.”

“This was one of those once-in-a-generation storms, comparable to the Blizzard of ‘78 and 2015’s ‘Snowmageddon,’ that people remember for the rest of their lives,” said

Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll. “While the snow has melted, the financial impact of the tremendous state and local effort remains, which is why this Major Disaster Declaration is so important. It ensures that our communities can recover, rebuild and be reimbursed for the extraordinary work it took to keep people safe.”

The blizzard, which dropped nearly three feet of snow on top of existing accumulation from a January storm, left extensive damage across the state. Hundreds of power lines and trees were downed, leading to outages that impacted hundreds and thousands of customers. Snowfall rates reached up to 4 inches per hour, made travel dangerous and prompting rescues of stranded motorists across the region. Governor Healey [declared a State of Emergency](#), activated the State Emergency Operations Center and National Guard, and [requested out-of-state assets](#) from Connecticut, New York and Vermont to support snow removal efforts.

Under the [Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act](#), the president can declare a major disaster for any natural event they determine has caused damage that exceeds the combined capabilities of state and local governments to respond. A Major Disaster Declaration secures financial assistance from the federal government, in this case through FEMA's Public Assistance Program, to provide funding to eligible local governments and non-profits for debris removal, protective measures (including emergency personnel, vehicles, and other resources), and repairs to public buildings and infrastructure. Counties that had record snowfall amounts would also be eligible for snow removal costs.

Following a disaster like February’s blizzard, the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) works directly with counterparts at FEMA Region 1 and impacted cities and towns to assess potentially reimbursable damages caused by, and costs related to, the disaster. Once these assessments are complete, FEMA validates whether the state and impacted counties have reached the required federal damage thresholds for a Major Disaster Declaration.

During initial damage assessments, MEMA also issued a survey to collect damage reports from private homes and businesses, the results of which indicated that Massachusetts would not meet federal criteria for direct aid to residents and businesses through the Individual Assistance program. The Governor’s declaration request includes statewide availability of hazard mitigation grant funding for eligible mitigation measures that reduce disaster losses.

“This blizzard required coordinated, sustained effort across state and municipal agencies, alongside our partners in non-governmental and volunteer organizations,” said **MEMA Director Dawn Brantley**. “The State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) fielded more than 200 requests from impacted communities, and neighboring states answered Massachusetts’ request for assistance, providing critical equipment and support. As we move through recovery, I want to commend the commitment of the communities that dedicated significant time and

attention to reporting the scope of damages while also facing the immediate challenges of storm cleanup.”

The SEOC remained activated through February 27. Thirty-four municipalities declared local states of emergency. Throughout the week, 170 warming centers were opened across the state to assist people who didn’t have heat or electricity due to power outages, which topped 290,000 at the peak of the storm. Thousands of students missed days of class time as many schools remained closed throughout the week to allow for cleanup and power restoration. Many communities reported an increase in wellness checks needed for older adults who were snowed in and unable to go to scheduled medical appointments throughout the week because of closed roads and doctor’s offices.

These efforts underscore the scale of the storm and the importance of securing federal support to help communities recover and rebuild.

For more information about disaster response efforts and available support for communities, visit [Mass.gov/MEMA](https://www.mass.gov/MEMA).

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