

On Friday, February 16, 2001, the people of 18 Mississippi counties experienced treacherous storms that damaged countless homes, businesses and property, and took the life of one person. The next weekend Mississippians in 17 counties felt the devastations of a tornado that took five lives and damaged the property and homes of even more of our people. Unfortunately, Mississippi has felt the damaging affects of this dangerous weather, including floods, hurricanes, hail, tornadoes and straight-line winds. Following the first weekend of damage, MEMA immediately responded, sending disaster teams to prepare damage assessment reports. FEMA officials came to assist, and we made a request for disaster assistance from President Bush for Mississippi's people, businesses and local governments in the disaster zones that had emergency funding needs.

The President responded quickly to our request placing three counties in a State of Emergency, thus opening the way for direct federal assistance. When the second storms hit Mississippi on February 24, 2001, we had MEMA and FEMA teams in place, assessments were quickly completed and 14 additional counties were granted public assistance and 35 counties were granted individual assistance, which was added to the original disaster request to the President allowing for immediate federal assistance for all counties.

We are grateful for the continuing efforts and teamwork exemplified by state, local, and federal agencies to assist Mississippians who are in dire need of assistance during extremely difficult times. Our thoughts and prayers are with each person who has suffered through and we thank the countless volunteers, companies and organizations that are helping to rebuild the lives of our people and the communities where they live, work and raise their families.