



Commonwealth of Virginia
Office of the Governor

Executive Order

NUMBER FOUR (2018)

DECLARATION OF A STATE OF EMERGENCY FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA DUE TO SEVERE WEATHER

Importance of the Issue

On this date, February 12, 2018, I verbally declared a state of emergency to exist due to severe weather that began affecting portions of the Commonwealth of Virginia and resulted in local emergency declarations in the Counties of Buchanan, Dickenson, Lee, and Wise, and the City of Norton on February 10, 2018, resulting in significant flooding, road closures, mudslides, and damage to property.

The health and general welfare of the citizens require that state action be taken to help alleviate the conditions caused by this situation. The effects of this incident constitute a disaster wherein human life and public and private property are imperiled, as described in § 44-146.16 of the *Code of Virginia*.

Therefore, by virtue of the authority vested in me by § 44-146.17 of the *Code of Virginia*, as Governor and as Director of Emergency Management, and by virtue of the authority vested in me by Article V, Section 7 of the Constitution of Virginia and by § 44-75.1 of the *Code of Virginia*, as Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces of the Commonwealth, and subject always to my continuing and ultimate authority and responsibility to act in such matters, I hereby confirm, ratify, and memorialize in writing my verbal order issued on this date, February 12, 2018, that a state of emergency exists and I direct that appropriate assistance be rendered by agencies of both state and local governments to prepare for potential impacts of this severe weather event, alleviate any conditions resulting from the incident, and to implement recovery and mitigation operations and activities so as to return impacted areas to pre-event conditions in so far as possible.

In order to marshal all public resources and appropriate preparedness, response, and recovery measures to meet this threat and recover from its effects, and in accordance with

my authority contained in § 44-146.17 of the *Code of Virginia*, I hereby order the following measures:

- A. Implementation by state agencies of the Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan (COVEOP), as amended, along with other appropriate state agency plans.
- B. Activation of the Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC) and the Virginia Emergency Support Team (VEST), as directed by the State Coordinator of Emergency Management, to coordinate the provision of assistance to local governments and emergency services assignments of other agencies as necessary and determined by the State Coordinator of Emergency Management and other agencies as appropriate.
- C. I direct that appropriate assistance, including temporary assignments of non-essential state employees to the Adjunct Emergency Workforce, be rendered by agencies of state government to respond to this situation.
- D. Evacuation of areas threatened or stricken by effects of the severe weather and flooding, as appropriate. Pursuant to § 44-146.17(1) of the *Code of Virginia*, I reserve the right to direct and compel the evacuation of all or part of the populace therein from such areas and upon such timetable as the local governing body, in coordination with the VEOC, acting on behalf of the State Coordinator of Emergency Management, shall determine. I authorize the control of ingress and egress at an emergency area, including the movement of persons within the area and the occupancy of premises therein upon such timetable as the local governing body, in coordination with the State Coordinator of Emergency Management and the VEOC, shall determine. Violations of any order to citizens to evacuate shall constitute a violation of this Executive Order and are punishable as a Class 1 misdemeanor.
- E. Activation, implementation, and coordination of appropriate mutual aid agreements and compacts, including the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), and the authorization of the State Coordinator of Emergency Management to enter into any other supplemental agreements, pursuant to § 44-146.17(5) and § 44-146.28:1 of the *Code of Virginia*. The State Coordinator of Emergency Management is hereby designated as Virginia's authorized representative within the meaning of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, § 44-146.28:1 of the *Code of Virginia*.
- F. The authorization of appropriate oversight boards, commissions, and agencies to ease building code restrictions and to permit emergency demolition, hazardous waste disposal, debris removal, emergency landfill siting, and operations and other activities necessary to address immediate health and safety needs without regard to time-consuming procedures or formalities and without regard to application or permit fees or royalties.
- G. I hereby authorize the heads of executive branch agencies, acting when appropriate on behalf of their regulatory boards, to waive any state requirements or regulation for which the federal government has issued a waiver of the corresponding federal or state regulation based on the impact of events related to this situation.

- H. Activation of the statutory provisions in § 59.1-525 et seq. of the *Code of Virginia* related to price gouging.
- I. Authorization of a maximum of \$900,000 in state sum sufficient funds for state and local governments mission assignments authorized and coordinated through the Virginia Department of Emergency Management that are allowable as defined by The Stafford Act or *Code of Virginia*. This funding is also available for state response and recovery operations and incident documentation.
- J. Implementation by public agencies under my supervision and control of their emergency assignments as directed in the COVEOP without regard to normal procedures pertaining to performance of public work, entering into contracts, incurring of obligations or other logistical and support measures of the Emergency Services and Disaster Laws, as provided in § 44-146.28(b) of the *Code of Virginia*. § 44-146.24 of the *Code of Virginia* also applies to the disaster activities of state agencies.
- K. During this declared emergency, any person who holds a license, certificate, or other permit issued by any U.S. territory, state, or political subdivision thereof, evidencing the meeting of qualifications for professional, mechanical, or other skills, the person, without compensation other than reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses, may render aid involving that skill in the Commonwealth during a disaster, and such person shall not be liable for negligently causing the death of, or injury to, any person or for the loss of, or damage to, the property of any person resulting from such service as set forth in *Code of Virginia* § 44-146.23(C). Additionally, members and personnel of volunteer, professional, auxiliary, and reserve groups identified and tasked by the State Coordinator of Emergency Management for specific disaster-related mission assignments as representatives of the Commonwealth engaged in emergency services activities within the meaning of the immunity provisions of § 44-146.23(a) and (f) of the *Code of Virginia*, in the performance of their specific disaster-related mission assignments.
- L. Designation of physicians, nurses, and other licensed and non-licensed health care providers and other individuals as well as hospitals, nursing facilities and other licensed and non-licensed health care organizations, political subdivisions and other private entities by agencies of the Commonwealth, including but not limited to the Department of Health, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, Department of Social Services, Department of Emergency Management, Department of Transportation, Department of State Police, Department of Motor Vehicles, as representatives of the Commonwealth engaged in emergency services activities, at sites designated by the Commonwealth, within the meaning of the immunity provisions of § 44-146.23 (a) of the *Code of Virginia*, in the performance of their disaster-related mission assignments.
- M. Upon my approval, the costs incurred by state agencies and other agents in performing mission assignments through the VEOC of the Commonwealth as defined herein and in § 44-146.28 of the *Code of Virginia*, other than costs defined in the paragraphs above pertaining to the Virginia National Guard and pertaining to the Virginia Defense Force, in performing these missions shall be paid from state funds.

Effective Date of this Executive Order

This Executive Order shall be effective February 12, 2018, and shall remain in full force and effect until June 30, 2018, unless sooner amended or rescinded by further executive order. Termination of the Executive Order is not intended to terminate any federal-type benefits granted or to be granted due to injury or death as a result of service under this Executive Order.

Given under my hand and under the Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia, this 12th day of February 2018.

Ralph S. Northam, Governor

Attest:

Kelly Thomasson, Secretary of the Commonwealth