



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ISSUES LOCAL DISASTER PROCLAMATION DUE TO CATASTROPHIC FLOODING AND DAMAGE ALONG THE CITY'S LAKEFRONT

CHICAGO—Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today issued a local disaster proclamation due to significant flooding and major damage to the City of Chicago's shoreline, infrastructure and recreational areas as a result of severe weather on January 10-11, 2020. The proclamation activates the City of Chicago's emergency operations plan and authorizes the furnishing of aid and assistance necessary to carry out the plan.

Today, Mayor Lightfoot sent a letter to Governor JB Pritzker requesting a state proclamation for the City of Chicago, which would authorize the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) to coordinate State resources to assist in response and recovery as well as request Federal resources and assistance. The Governor issued a state disaster proclamation for Cook and Lake Counties to help communities recover from the storm, including substantial property damage along more than 30 miles of the Lake Michigan shoreline. City personnel will work closely with the State to gather, validate and document the information needed to support a federal major disaster declaration.

"One of Chicago's strongest assets is our lakeshore, and due to the severity of recent storms we've witnessed irreparable damage to our lakefront beaches and infrastructure," said Mayor Lightfoot. "While the City has worked extensively over the past few months to respond to the damage and to secure the infrastructure and beaches along our lake front - it is clear that this is a challenge we can't solve alone. To respond to the immediate challenges facing our lakefront as highlighted by the storm on January 10-11, we have declared disaster status to ensure Chicago receives the supports needed for addressing the scope of this issue for the long term. We remain committed to working with all stakeholders at the state and federal level in order to protect and preserve this vital piece of Chicago's landscape."

The City of Chicago is currently working to remedy damage from the January storm, which unleashed heavy rain, snow, ice, and localized flooding, followed by strong winds and widespread lakeshore flooding. Gusting winds in excess of 50 mph brought large, battering waves up to 23 feet high onto shoreline areas. The flooding from this storm resulted in full and partial road and trail closures near the lakefront and substantial damage to Chicago's beaches and recreational areas along the shoreline.



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According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Lake Michigan water levels will remain high over the next several months. Over the past several months, the City has worked extensively to mitigate damage, prevent erosion and protect infrastructure along Chicago's North and South shorelines. The Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), OEMC, the Chicago Park District and other City departments have been coordinating closely with the US Army Corp of Engineers on these efforts.

In order to help the City better understand the full scope of shoreline vulnerability, CDOT and the Park District have been working to gather data on the damage caused by recent storms and potential future impacts on private property.

CDOT has installed more than 10,000 cubic yards of rip rap over the last two months at Juneway, Howard and Rogers beaches on the far North Side to halt further damage and erosion caused by the recent storms. CDOT and the Park District are also coordinating with the Army Corps on a project to install rip rap from 48th to 50th streets starting in March.

In addition, the City has installed more than 5,000 feet of jersey barriers and 1,000 feet of sandbags at sensitive locations on the North and South shorelines to protect roadways from flooding during storms.

The Department of Water Management has also been supporting these efforts by ensuring catch-basins are kept clear along the lakefront. This plus the concrete barriers and sandbags are intended to stop the waves from flooding local streets, arterials such as Sheridan Road and Lake Shore Drive and South Shore Drive.

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