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Andrew M. Cuomo - Governor

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Governor Cuomo Declares State of Emergency as Winter Storm Hits New York State

Albany, NY (February 8, 2013)

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today declared a state of emergency as a major winter storm has already started to bring heavy snow and high winds to parts of New York State. A state of emergency mobilizes resources to local governments that otherwise are restricted to state use only and allows the Governor to suspend laws and regulations that would impede rapid response. The disaster declaration is in effect for the following counties: Bronx, Dutchess, Kings, Nassau, New York, Orange, Putnam, Queens, Richmond, Rockland, Suffolk and Westchester.

The Governor urged New Yorkers to avoid traveling and stay inside their homes until the worst of the storm has passed. Blizzard warnings remain in effect through 1:00 PM Saturday for affected areas of the state. An estimated 10-14 inches of snow is expected for New York City with areas in Long Island possibly receiving upwards of 20 inches. Wind speeds are beginning to pick up with gusts reaching 40 mph in NYC and a chance for gusts to reach near 70 mph on the forks of Long Island.

"As this winter storm unfolds, bringing heavy snow and high winds to parts of the state, I strongly urge all New Yorkers to exercise caution, avoid travel, and stay indoors," Governor Cuomo said. "To ensure an effective and rapid response to this winter storm, I am declaring a state of emergency for counties in the lower Hudson Valley, New York City, and Long Island so resources can get to communities where they are needed as quickly as possible."

Steps taken to ensure readiness include:

Public Transportation

- The MTA has advised riders that the storm may require suspension of some portions of the region's subway, bus and commuter train operations.
- The MTA has prepped and deployed its fleet of snow and ice-busting equipment to keep outdoor tracks, switches and the electrified third rail clear of snow and ice.
- The MTA has canceled all weekend work.
- MTA personnel have been deployed to keep subway stairways clear of snow and salted to melt ice.
- Outdoor subway lines are subject to temporary suspension after 8 pm for snow clearing.
- Personnel have been deployed to help keep bus stops clear of ice and snow and manpower and equipment have been strategically placed to respond to any problems buses may encounter on the road. Some bus models are equipped with chains and special attention is paid to hilly routes which could pose problems.
- Earlier today, Long Island Rail Road urged customers in New York City to leave for eastbound trips in the early afternoon, before the brunt of the forecast snowstorm begins to hit the region.
- The LIRR will suspend service if snow accumulations reach between 10-13 inches. Crews will be out in force to clear tracks and the third rail used to power electric trains.
- Extra Metro North trains were made available during the early afternoon to help customers return home before the brunt of the storm.
- The predicted severity of the winter storm will require Metro-North to further change its scheduled service. Between 8 PM and 1 AM, Metro-North expects to operate limited service as follows: On the New Haven Line and Harlem Line, there will be half-hourly service out

of Grand Central and hourly service toward Grand Central. On the Hudson Line, there will be hourly service in both directions. As the evening progresses, train service may be suspended, depending upon weather conditions, to prevent trains from becoming stranded during the storm.

- Several major long-haul bus carriers already have ceased operations from the Port Authority Bus Terminal to points north of New York City. Travelers are strongly urged to check with their bus carriers before heading to the terminal this evening and tomorrow.
- PATH service is operating normally and has extra trains on standby to provide additional service for customers who leave work early today in advance of the storm.

Roads and Bridges

- Interstate 84 from the Pennsylvania state line to the Connecticut state line is closed to commercial truck traffic due to the winter weather conditions. All commercial vehicles including large trucks (over 26,000 pounds GCWR/GVWR), tractors, tractor trailers and buses will not be permitted on the 70-mile stretch of highway effective immediately. The ban will remain in effect until further notice.
- Motorists using bridges should allow extra travel time and operate at reduced speeds due to wet roadways. As the storm intensifies, high winds and white out conditions may result in intermittent bridge or ramp closures. Certain vehicles, including motorcycles, tractor trailers, step vans, mini buses, trucks with open backs, cars pulling trailers, motorhomes, and vehicles carrying plate glass, may be temporarily barred from using crossings due to high winds and wet roadways.
- A 35 mph speed limit is in effect on the following bridges: Tappan Zee, George Washington, the Goethals, Bayonne, and Outerbridge Crossing
- There is approximately 470,000 tons of salt on hand across the state to pre-treat roads as precipitation begins.
- More than 1,770 plow trucks are ready to respond
- All Thruway and NYSDOT maintenance headquarters will be fully staffed around the clock for the duration of the storm

Airports

- The five New York City airports are open, but airlines are operating on a greatly reduced schedule, with more than 2,300 flights cancelled as of mid-afternoon. Crews are applying anti-icing chemicals to runways and taxiways to keep them free of ice. In the event that some travelers become stranded, airport personnel are preparing cots, blankets and other essentials to assist customers. All air travelers should check with their carriers regarding resumption of flights tomorrow.
 - At JFK Airport, airlines have notified the agency that they anticipate ceasing flight activity as of 6:30 p.m. tonight, with many carriers stopping sooner
 - At LaGuardia, most flight operations ceased as of 4:00 p.m.
 - At Stewart Airport, the last scheduled flight activity was at 4:45 p.m.
 - At Newark Liberty Airport, airlines stopped service as of 4:00 p.m.

Public Safety

- All specialty vehicles in the State Police's fleet including ATV's, snowmobiles and four wheel drive vehicles have been prepared for emergency response use. All emergency power and communications equipment has been tested.
- State Police troopers normally assigned to Traffic Incident Management and Commercial Vehicle Enforcement troopers have been re-assigned to patrol duties for this storm.
- State Police personnel in each troop have been pre-identified to be available for deployment to hardest hit areas of the state if necessary.
- State Police will provide staff to any county emergency operations centers that may be activated to help coordinate responses with local agencies.
- Extra troopers have been brought into the Lower Hudson Valley and Long Island to assist with these response efforts
- The Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Services has staff in Emergency Operation Centers to coordinate state and county responses in affected areas.

Power

- As of 4:00PM 1,260 electric customers were out of service due to the weather conditions. National Grid is reporting that approximately 735 LIPA customers are out of service with 422 in Nassau County and 312 in Suffolk County.
- The electric utilities have transitioned from preparation activities to response mode. In total, approximately 4,700 crews are available to respond to power disruption.

- Utilities' consumer services have added after hours and weekend staff to deal with outage complaints and provide the public with information.
- NYPA has called in extra shift personnel and has snow removal equipment and emergency generators ready to be utilized
- Supplies of diesel fuel and gasoline are available at NYPA power plant and transmission sites

Racing Facilities:

- No Racing at Aqueduct on Saturday

Parks

- Four Freedoms Park is closed
- Nissequogue River State Park is closed

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