



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

September 20, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Through: Regional Administrator Tony Robinson
FEMA Region 6
Denton, Texas

RE: Request for Presidential Disaster Declaration — Emergency Disaster Declaration

Dear Mr. President:

Under the provisions of Section 501 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. § 5121-5207 (Stafford Act), and implemented by 44 C.F.R. § 206.35, I request an emergency declaration for the State of Texas as a result of the ongoing border crisis, which reached such magnitude and duration, that on May 31, 2021, I formally recognized the disaster and it continues to escalate as evidenced by the dire situation in Val Verde County.

Border security is a federal responsibility; however, in response to the current situation, I have taken the appropriate action under state law by directing the execution of the state's emergency management plan and by declaring a state of disaster on May 31, 2021, for multiple Texas counties across the state's southern border.

I submit this request due to the overwhelming surge of individuals unlawfully attempting to cross the Texas-Mexico border in Val Verde County. These illegal crossings are aided by a dam on federal property, and thus under the jurisdiction of the federal government, which allows individuals to easily traverse the Rio Grande River. The rush of migrants increased from approximately 4,000 individuals on Wednesday, September 15, 2021, to over 16,000 migrants on Saturday, September 18, 2021. The entrance of illegal immigrants shows no signs of slowing. This surge poses life-threatening risks to residents of Val Verde County and is quickly overrunning law enforcement and health care and humanitarian resources which were never

intended to be used in this capacity. Even the limited federal resources in the area are strained by the large number of individuals illegally crossing into Texas.

Pursuant to 44 C.F.R. § 206.35, I have determined that the disaster caused from individuals unlawfully crossing the Texas-Mexico border is of such severity that supplementary federal assistance is necessary to lessen the threat of disaster, save lives, and protect property, public health, and safety. I request Direct Federal Assistance (DFA) in order to meet the unprecedented critical emergency protection requirements that demand that the federal government respond to aid the unprecedented strain put on non-federal resources. Given the severity of the threat, I am also requesting Public Assistance Category B (Emergency Protective Measures) for Val Verde County, Texas. Additional, immediate measures, such as preventing illegal crossings at the federal dam in Val Verde County, would also aid the response. Consistent with my many requests for federal assistance to address the border crisis, I believe these federal assets are justifiable for communities all along the Texas-Mexico border; however, the situation this week requires an immediate response to the situation in Val Verde County, Texas.

In addition, I request the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program statewide. I reserve the right to request additional federal assistance programs and include additional counties as we further assess damages and as the situation evolves.

INCIDENT OVERVIEW

Throughout much of 2021, the State of Texas has worked continuously to respond to a growing surge in illegal border crossings and an escalating humanitarian crisis at the Texas-Mexico border. Texas residents' property is being destroyed; crimes are occurring; humans, deadly drugs and illegal weapons are being smuggled into communities throughout the state; law enforcement is having to redirect their resources; and county judges and mayors are facing skyrocketing expenses. While Texans face the brunt of these negative impacts, it is common knowledge that border-related drugs, weapons, and crimes impact local jurisdictions across the United States.

On September 15, 2021, in Val Verde County, a concentrated surge of migrants illegally crossed the U.S./Mexico border and began to camp at the International Bridge in Del Rio, Texas. On Saturday, September 18, this number reached approximately 16,000 individuals.

Families, including infants and children, need food, water, and medical supplies that the local government cannot supply. Thousands of families are immobilized in 100-degree heat as their numbers continue to swell as they wait to be processed by the approximately 64 federal agents in the area. Individuals are camping in squalid conditions and bathing in muddy river water, causing great health concerns.

The city of Del Rio's population is approximately 35,000 people and the influx of 16,000 new migrants far exceeds local capabilities. There are not enough medical facilities or resources to

care for so many that need medication, are ill, suffer from heat exhaustion, or give birth to children. To compound the matter, public health issues relating to the current COVID-19 pandemic create additional dangers to residents and the migrants themselves, and the State of Texas has been provided no clear information about whether these individuals have received a COVID-19 vaccination or have been tested for the virus, or if they be exposing Texans and Americans to COVID.

Law enforcement capabilities are stretched across the region and state. Multiple U.S. Border Patrol interior checkpoints are currently closed, allowing criminals smuggling humans and drugs to travel freely into the state. The Texas Department of Public Safety and Texas National Guard are being forced to send thousands of state personnel to the area even though immigration and border security are federal responsibilities.

Response

The State of Texas is doing more than any state has ever done to protect the border, but more is needed. The following state agencies are currently mobilized to support requests from local officials:

- **Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS):** DPS is enforcing all state criminal laws including for criminal trespassing, smuggling, and human trafficking. In response to the surge of illegal crossings near the International Bridge in Del Rio, DPS has surged hundreds of State Troopers.
- **Texas National Guard:** assists with fencing construction and enforcement of state laws, including arresting people who have crossed the border illegally. In response to the surge of illegal crossings near the International Bridge in Del Rio, like DPS, the Texas National Guard has surged over a thousand soldiers to the Del Rio Sector alone.
- **Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM):** TDEM staff, along with activated members of the state's Emergency Management Council, continue to conduct command and control operations in the State Operations Center (SOC).
- **Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ):** TDCJ operates the Val Verde expanded booking facility and supports detainee operations.
- **Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT):** TxDOT continues to construct temporary border barriers.
- **Texas Emergency Medical Task Force (EMTF):** The EMTF maintains operational ambulances and generators supporting multiple facilities and an AMBUS and rehab facility to support first responders.

Since 2014, the State of Texas has invested almost \$3.5 billion to secure the Texas/Mexico border and protect public safety. Additionally, in response to the ongoing surge of migrants experienced this year, the Texas legislature more than tripled state spending, appropriating another \$3 billion for the current budget to address border security. Since the May 31, 2021, state disaster declaration, the State of Texas has spent over \$84 million beyond its regular budgeted

appropriation to combat the ongoing crisis at our international border. These costs include labor, equipment, supply and contract costs for multiple state agencies. The table below is a snapshot of reported expenses as of September 17, 2021:

Agency Reporting	Personnel (Head Count)	Straight Time	Overtime	Travel	Equipment	Materials	Rentals	Fuel	Water/ Ice	Contracts	Leases	Repairs	Other	Reporting Agency Total
Finance DPS Aviation	390	\$111,512.62	\$77,862.76	\$26,030.52	\$16,102.72	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$659,910.00	\$891,418.62
Finance DPS CID	5,286	\$1,242,051.99	\$1,226,731.98	\$430,010.65	\$673,974.32	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$66,975.50	\$3,639,744.44
Finance DPS Intelligence	528	\$73,780.74	\$75,013.29	\$14,501.94	\$4,449.28	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$167,745.25
Finance DPS Marine Unit	648	\$157,399.81	\$155,820.12	\$45,900.76	\$36,072.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$19,116.50	\$414,309.19
Finance DPS Rangers	105	\$28,785.92	\$29,087.94	\$10,231.80	\$10,617.48	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$8,702.50	\$87,425.64
Finance DPS Special Ops	416	\$97,212.62	\$103,832.97	\$49,715.37	\$33,957.89	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$21,453.50	\$306,172.35
Finance DPS THP	38,104	\$9,094,850.43	\$7,396,829.64	\$2,547,647.98	\$3,689,407.27	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,543,976.00	\$24,272,711.32
Finance DSHS	125	\$15,582.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$989,014.04	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,004,596.04
Finance TCJS	116	\$38,153.48	\$0.00	\$775.36	\$0.00	\$108.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$15,620.31	\$54,657.15
Finance TDCJ	0	\$1,752,419.92	\$447,781.11	\$169,919.95	\$145,965.39	\$1,775,056.02	\$13,298.80	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,304,461.19
Finance TDEM	270	\$94,944.07	\$28,798.51	\$397.03	\$108.00	\$96,727.82	\$407.99	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,256,276.31	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,477,659.73
Finance TFS TAMU	54	\$21,936.00	\$0.00	\$8,238.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$30,174.00
Finance TIFMAS	1,018	\$232,360.44	\$1,035,724.24	\$105,705.34	\$284,962.60	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,658,752.62
Finance TPWD	503	\$220,923.00	\$0.00	\$22,050.18	\$38,638.91	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$281,612.09
Finance TXDOT	573	\$770,880.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$38,749.80	\$5,218.16	\$479,522.07	\$14,339.93	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,308,709.96
Finance TxMF	325,785	\$21,003,028.00	\$0.00	\$20,335,594.24	\$119,219.55	\$377,528.19	\$890,091.59	\$243,857.90	\$18,941.63	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$13,260.00	\$43,801,521.10
Grand Total	373,921	\$35,755,821.04	\$10,577,482.57	\$23,766,719.12	\$5,092,245.21	\$2,254,638.19	\$1,383,320.45	\$258,197.83	\$18,941.63	\$3,245,290.35	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,349,014.31	\$84,701,670.70

The figures above do not include the millions of dollars in costs which local jurisdictions have incurred throughout the year responding to this border crisis. This disaster is depleting local, regional and state resources and causing undue mental and financial stress to Texans.

Background

The State of Texas has been granted more federal disaster declarations than any other state, which does not account for the numerous state disasters that did not meet federal thresholds and requirements. The State of Texas is currently engaged in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, recovery from the 2021 Severe Winter Weather Storm – Uri, and recovery from Hurricane Nicholas, which has exhausted much of the state’s resources. The state also continues recovery efforts from seven major disasters, and one federally declared emergency over the last three years.

Closing

Pursuant to 44 C.F.R. § 206.35, this incident is of such magnitude and severity that effective response demands federal assistance to adequately support state and local capabilities, and supplementary federal assistance is necessary to save lives and protect property, public health, and safety.

As a result of this disaster, the State of Texas is specifically requesting an emergency declaration for Public Assistance Category B (Emergency Protective Measures), DFA and the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program statewide.

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr

September 20, 2021

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I have designated Chief Nim Kidd as the Governor's Authorized Representative (GAR) and Suzannah Jones and Warren Weidler as Alternate GARs. Nim Kidd is designated as the State Coordinating Officer (SCO) and Suzannah Jones is designated as the Deputy State Coordinating Officer (DSCO) for this request. Chief Kidd will work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and will provide further information and justification on my behalf.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Abbott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Greg Abbott
Governor

GA:mhd