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Governor



STATE OF WASHINGTON

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**DIRECTIVE BY THE GOVERNOR**  
**09-14**

September 14, 2009

**TO:** Executive Cabinet Agencies  
Director, Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Commissioner of Public Lands  
Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Attorney General  
Insurance Commissioner

**FROM:** Christine O. Gregoire  
Governor

**SUBJECT:** Preparing for Potential Green River Flooding

Protecting the public health, safety, and welfare of the people of Washington State is my highest priority and one of the primary functions of state government. State government ensures the protection the public expects, in part, through preparing to respond to problems through vigorous cooperation among governments both during, and in advance of those problems developing. We know that only by coordinating all of our federal, state, county, local and tribal governmental resources can we achieve our common objectives. With those lessons in mind, I provide the following direction to my cabinet agencies and invite other statewide elected officials and their agencies to join me in ensuring that all government agencies have taken the necessary steps to prevent potential damages and are fully ready to respond to the increased risks of flooding of the Green River valley.

For over 40 years the Howard Hanson Dam and Green River levees in King County provided effective flood control, but structural problems discovered earlier this year may have diminished the effectiveness of the dam. The United States Army Corps of Engineers operates the Howard Hanson Dam and is closely monitoring it and the Green River downstream of the dam. Agencies and governments are coordinating plans for a possible flood in order to prevent and lessen the impact on residents and businesses in the Green River Valley. The state is doing all it can to support those efforts, and this directive indicates my intention that the state of Washington will continue to be an active partner in the efforts of affected jurisdictions to address the problems at the Howard Hanson Dam.

Since we first learned of the potential problems with the Howard Hanson Dam, I have taken several steps to ensure that these problems will be addressed expeditiously and any risk of damage resulting from failure of the dam is minimized. Those steps include:

- On July 20, I sent a letter to the United States Army Corps of Engineers requesting that the Corps provide materials and equipment to improve the levees before this coming flood season. The Corps is working closely with King County, the cities in the Valley, and the state emergency managers on these short term measures. I know the Army Corps is also working hard on repairing the dam, with interim repairs under way now and permanent repairs being studied.
- I am also working actively with our congressional delegation to ensure we have funding for both short-term and long-term solutions for the Howard Hanson Dam. Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell and Congressmen Norm Dicks, Adam Smith, Jim McDermott and Dave Reichert are committed to finding those solutions. I am deeply grateful for their support.
- My office and agencies under my supervision have supported King County and the cities of the Green River in their preparations for potential flooding.

Those activities will continue and be expanded upon in the coming months. In order to further enhance the supportive functions of state government, I hereby direct the following state entities and functions to support King County and the involved local and tribal governments in the described ways:

- Principal Point of Contact - I designate Washington's Adjutant General Timothy Lowenberg as the principal state official to act on my behalf to work with affected jurisdictions. General Lowenberg will ensure that federal, county, local and tribal officials have a senior point of contact to coordinate and oversee all state support functions related to the Howard Hanson Dam and Green River response.
- I direct the Adjutant General to convene and chair a Green River Flood Preparation Subcabinet, consisting of state agency directors and the agencies reporting to other statewide elected officials, to ensure the effective delivery of state support and services to the affected jurisdictions.
- State agencies and departments are directed, within existing budgetary authorization, to utilize state resources and to do everything reasonably possible to assist affected governments in their response to this situation. State agency and department heads are directed to support General Lowenberg in his assigned duties and to respond to specific requests.
- All state agencies should be prepared to implement their assigned duties as specified in the Washington State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan. In addition, all state agency and department heads must evaluate the potential impact of potential Green

River flooding on their operations and take appropriate continuity and mitigation measures.

- State agencies are directed to report to the Adjutant General on their readiness to implement the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and on their continuity and mitigation measures by October 30, 2009.

In addition to these general directions, I hereby direct the specific agencies below to provide the following support to the preparedness efforts of affected jurisdictions:

#### **Military Department**

- Facilitate the Green River Flood Preparations Subcabinet and coordinate the state's assistance to affected jurisdictions through the State Emergency Operations Center.
- Assign knowledgeable staff to assist King County in developing county contingency plans.
- Offer training and preparedness workshops for emergency managers and elected officials of affected jurisdictions.
- Collaborate with affected jurisdictions in providing information to the public related to mitigation and preparedness measures.

#### **Department of Transportation**

- Assist affected jurisdictions in developing evacuation routes using state managed highways and acquiring transportation capabilities in support of evacuation and mitigation of flooding.
- Coordinate with the Military Department in developing an aviation Search and Rescue plan.

#### **Department of Information Services**

- Work with the Military Department and affected jurisdictions to test and refine the alert, warning and notification networks and systems.

#### **General Administration**

- Identify state-agency facilities that are potentially at risk in the Green River flood plain.
- Identify short-term (sheltering) housing structures and develop a plan to assist affected jurisdictions in contracting for shelter management on short notice.
- Assist affected jurisdictions to develop a contracting plan for short-term housing and feeding operations.

#### **Department of Social and Health Services**

- Assist affected jurisdictions as they identify special needs populations in the potentially affected areas and plan for the care of special needs populations.
- Work with affected jurisdictions to help translate emergency messaging into appropriate languages.

### **Department of Commerce**

- Work with energy providers to identify and mitigate potential effects on energy infrastructure.
- Support the planning of affected jurisdictions for interim and long-term housing of residents displaced by a flood.
- Assist affected jurisdictions, chambers of commerce and other business associations in preparing plans for continuity of operations and mitigation measures.

### **Department of Health**

- Assist the health departments of affected jurisdictions as they evaluate and plan for potential vaccination and other health care needs during a potential flood event.
- Offer technical assistance to affected jurisdictions to help identify and protect critical water supply infrastructure.

### **Department of Ecology**

- Work with affected jurisdictions to prepare a hazardous material and waste management flood prevention plan.
- Offer technical assistance to affected jurisdictions to help identify and protect critical wastewater treatment infrastructure.

### **Washington State Patrol**

- Participate with affected jurisdictions and Department of Transportation to develop an evacuation and traffic control plan.
- Work with affected law enforcement agencies on security planning.

### **Department of Agriculture**

- Assist affected jurisdictions to plan for agricultural livestock animal care and sheltering and for potential livestock animal disposal needs.
- Offer technical assistance to affected jurisdictions to plan for food supply and food quality protection at emergency shelters.

### **Washington State Conservation Commission**

- In coordination with the Department of Agriculture, assist affected jurisdictions and agricultural associations to plan for the protection of the food supply and continuity of agricultural operations.

### **Department of Fish and Wildlife**

- Identify personnel and equipment necessary to support swift water rescue and to be available as needed and requested by the Adjutant General.

### **Governor's Office of Indian Affairs**

- Work with the Military Department and affected jurisdictions to ensure that affected tribal governments are supported in their planning efforts and are provided information relevant to their decision-making.

The tasks directed above are in addition to state agency responsibilities for flood prevention and response throughout the rest of the state, in consideration of the unusual flood risks in the Green River Valley posed by the damage to the Howard Hanson Dam. I expect additional activities will be necessary throughout the winter months and into spring 2010.

Finally, I invite and encourage the Commissioner of Public Lands, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Attorney General and the Insurance Commissioner to assign staff and resources to assist in this work, as able and appropriate. They, or their representatives, are invited to be members of the new Subcabinet. The expertise of their agencies would significantly improve the state's ability to help the Green River Valley prepare for potential flooding.

In closing, I have been impressed many times by our state's ability to respond to danger: forest fires, drought, snow storms and more than one major flood. In light of the severity of the potential damage that could result from the observed problems with the Howard Hanson Dam, we must summon again the common sense and courage of Washington. Rather than wait for today's potential problems to become an actual emergency, we're going to rise to the challenge and meet it with a thoughtful and ready response