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Federal Highway Administration

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590
202-366-4000

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News

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Contact: Nancy Singer
Tel.: (202) 366-0660

U.S. Department of Transportation Announces \$4.15 Million for Emergency Repairs to Roads and Bridges in Wisconsin

Additional \$100,000 for Michigan National Forest Roads

WASHINGTON – U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx today announced the immediate availability of \$4.15 million in Emergency Relief (ER) funds from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to help repair roads and bridges damaged by heavy rains and subsequent flash flooding in northern Wisconsin.

“The Department has put the reopening of critical transportation links in northern Wisconsin at the top of the priority list,” said Secretary Foxx. “With many communities cut off from vital necessities and services, we know the situation there is dire.”

Last Tuesday, Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker declared a state of emergency in the northern part of the state after storms caused flooding in eight counties. More than a dozen roads remain washed out in the counties of Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Price, Sawyer and Washburn.

Many roads may remain closed for weeks with detours posted, including Highway 13 in Ashland, sections of Highway 63 in Bayfield, parts of Highways 122 and 169 in Iron and Highway 35 in Burnett.

Wisconsin will receive \$2.75 million to stabilize roads to prevent further damage and set up detours until permanent repairs are completed on federal-aid highways. The work will include repairs to roadway embankments and multi-use paths.

In addition, FHWA's Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads Program (ERFO) will provide immediate assistance to address damage to roads of tribal transportation facilities and other federally owned roads. The Bureau of Indian Affairs will be awarded \$500,000 to repair roads and bridges on the Bad River Reservation of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians in Wisconsin, including numerous culverts and the Kakagon Bridge. Through the Forest Service, \$900,000 will be allocated for the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest in Wisconsin with an additional \$100,000 for the adjacent Ottawa National Forest in Michigan to address road damage in the national forests.

"These emergency funds will be key to allowing the people of Wisconsin to expedite repairs in the impacted areas," said Federal Highway Administrator Gregory Nadeau. "We want to make sure we do everything we can to help repair and reopen roads quickly and safely."

This initial "quick release" payment is considered a first installment on costs of making short-term repairs now which can make long-term repair work possible in the weeks ahead, which are estimated to top \$15 million in Wisconsin. The FHWA's ER program provides funding for highways and bridges damaged by natural disasters or catastrophic events.

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Page posted on July 20, 2016.