Governor Markell Requests Federal Disaster Declaration for Winter Storm Damage

(Smyrna) –Governor Jack Markell submitted a formal request today to President Barack Obama, asking for a Presidential Disaster Declaration for the State of Delaware as a result of the winter nor’easter that impacted the state during the weekend of January 22nd.

In his letter to President Obama, the governor noted over three days of weather conditions of large snowfall totals, damaging winds, and coastal flooding causing substantial damage, particularly in coastal areas of the state. A State of Emergency was implemented, while Governor Markell authorized the Delaware National Guard to deploy assets throughout the state. The Delaware Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was activated, driving restrictions were issued by the Governor, and fire and police departments, and municipal and county EOCs were also activated for multiple days in response to the storm.

Governor Markell’s disaster declaration request also lists the substantial damage to the Rehoboth Beach and Bethany Beach boardwalks, as well as major damage or destruction suffered by 28 homes and businesses.

The request specifically asks the President for Public Assistance in the form of a Major Disaster Declaration for Sussex County, along with Hazard Mitigation Funding to be made available to all three counties. Governor Markell’s request letter states that total expenditures are expected to be in excess of $2.56-million.

In announcing his request of the President, Governor Markell
stated: “January’s nor’easter produced large snowfall totals, damaging winds as well as substantial and damaging coastal flooding across the State. Homes and businesses sustained major damage or were destroyed and state-maintained beaches suffered major erosion and dune breaches. I’ve requested $2.5 million in public assistance through a federal disaster declaration to help repair damage done by the storm, and hopefully that money will help our coastal communities rebuild what they’ve lost and prepare for the thousands of people who visit each summer.”

Following two days of site assessments by personnel from the Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA), and on-site inspections by officials from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), it was determined that Delaware may qualify for Public Assistance funding through a Presidential Disaster Declaration. Estimated costs for Public Assistance are listed in the request at $1,876,959.29 in Sussex County, $559,763.06 in Kent County, $130,257.24 in New Castle County. The funds requested in the disaster declaration would not include any beach work in Delaware done in collaboration with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.