



For Immediate Release
February 1, 2016
Contact: Jeremy Zidek (907) 429-7077

Press Release:

Governor Walker Issues Two Disaster Declarations for December Storms
State Public Assistance Activated to Help Communities Restore Critical Infrastructure

ANCHORAGE, Alaska – Governor Bill Walker issued two disaster declarations for storms that battered communities along the Aleutians and Bering Sea in December of 2015. The declarations activate the State of Alaska’s Public Assistance Program that is designed to help communities restore their critical infrastructure to a pre-disaster condition, fund emergency protective measures, and fund evaluation of the damages.

On Dec. 10, 2016, the National Weather Service (NWS) issued the first of several coastal flooding warnings for the Aleutian Islands, Bering Sea Islands, and western coastline of Alaska. The AccuWeather website forecast warned, “a potent storm that will cross the Aleutians Islands of Alaska this weekend could become the strongest recorded storm to impact the region.” The storms impacted a number of communities with the most severe damage to St. George’s and Togiak’s seawalls.

In addition to seawall damage, communities along the Aleutians and Bering Sea reported damages to docks, power distribution lines, city buildings, and boardwalks.

“These were savage storms. The first storm produced wind gusts up to 122 mph and wave heights between 40 and 50 feet. The damaged seawalls did their job and protected the communities during these near record storms,” said Mike O’Hare, Director of the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. “We need to repair them to protect these communities from future storms.”

The Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management will manage the state’s Public Assistance Program for the 2015 December Bering Sea Storms and the 2015 December Windstorm.

The State of Alaska and FEMA have conducted a Preliminary Damage Assessment in St. George to gather data that will be used in the state’s request for federal public assistance for the St. George seawall.

###