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**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Multiagency task force deploys to Buckland following Gov. Dunleavy's Disaster Declaration**

Task force to coordinate state response and conduct a Preliminary Damage Assessment

**JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska** – A task force, deployed by the State Emergency Operations Center, comprised of emergency management specialists, State Department of Environmental Conservation, Red Cross of Alaska, and the North West Arctic Borough (NWAB) are in Buckland today to coordinate the state's response and conduct a Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) after Governor Mike Dunleavy issued a disaster declaration on May 19. The disaster declaration was made after an ice jam on the Buckland River caused major flooding throughout the community.

The task force will meet with Buckland City and Tribal representatives, determine immediate mass care needs, conduct preliminary assessments of damages to homes and infrastructure, evaluate hazardous materials released during the flooding, and begin preparations for delivery of the state Individual Assistance and Public Assistance disaster programs.

The Alaska State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHS&EM) plans to open a Disaster Assistance Center in Buckland in early June to help residents with damages to their homes apply for the state's Individual Assistance program. The state's Individual Assistance program can help eligible applicants with expenses like temporary housing or damages to essential personal property from a declared disaster.

On May 12, an ice jam formed approximately one-quarter mile downriver from the community of Buckland, located within NWAB. The community stood up their Incident Command Team as the water began to rise and took emergency protective measures throughout the flooding. While Buckland was able to respond to the event with local resources, the NWAB and the state were ready to support if needed.

"Buckland's response to this event was tremendous. It was a textbook example of how a small community, and a regional borough government, should respond to a local disaster event," said Bryan Fisher, acting director of the DHS&EM. "Their swift response, and the abundance of response information, made our recommendation that the Governor declare a disaster straight forward."

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