By Nebraska Governor

Dave Heineman

I want to provide an update on the ongoing flood response in Nebraska.

Last week I submitted a request for a federal disaster declaration and it was granted immediately. The declaration covers 14 counties along the Missouri River and four Platte River counties. It will make federal assistance available for damages and losses to public infrastructure.

Our flooding challenges are going to be with us for months. This is going to be an emergency that continues to unfold and we anticipate the cleanup and recovery will extend much longer than any of us would like.

The size and scope of the challenge we are facing is extraordinary. Eight of the 17 river monitoring stations along the Platte River report water levels at or above flood stage. All of the 10 stations along the Missouri River are above flood stage – most by several feet.

Water flows along both rivers are predicted to remain high throughout the summer. Storm activity across Nebraska demonstrates the potential for heavy rain over the Platte and Missouri River, and all river systems, could quickly change conditions in communities across our state.

In spite of these challenges, I am very proud of the preparations that have taken place, the quickness of local and county officials in responding, and the partnership of Nebraskans who are being touched by flood challenges.

Our State Emergency Operations Center and all of the agencies activated in our response efforts are preparing to remain fully operational as long as this flooding emergency persists.

More than 100 Nebraska National Guard personnel are on duty to support our emergency planning. They have prepositioned supplies and are monitoring levee conditions from the ground and the air along the Missouri River, including South Sioux City, in Omaha, along the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District levees, and other areas of Douglas County. Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) personnel worked with Nemaha officials to develop a levee monitoring plan and National Guard personnel are assisting in those efforts.

Roads officials are talking frequently with counterparts in Iowa, South Dakota and Missouri to determine alternate routing for highways and interstates. Crews have temporarily elevated a segment of Highway 14 at Niobrara, and sandbagged Highway 75 at Plattsmouth and Highway 83 at North Platte. We are working with the railroads to protect rail lines in some areas to keep the railroads operational. Additionally, road and bridge inspectors continue to monitor highways, bridges and other infrastructure while pre-staging equipment needed to redirect motorists as roadways are affected.

While state and local officials are working to prevent as many losses as possible, we are also urging Nebraskans who have been impacted by recent storm and high wind damage, as well as individuals and businesses with flood-related damages to report property damage to NEMA.

Those with storm or flood damages to their property are encouraged to contact NEMA to provide basic information that will be helpful in tracking private damages. This includes those who have relocated, those whose homes have been impacted by flood waters, and any business that’s sustained damage or losses.

There are two options for filing a preliminary damage report. An electronic form is available on the NEMA website, www.nema.nebraska.gov, which can be filled out and submitted electronically. Damages can also be reported by calling the NEMA hotlines at (855) 211-2453, or (855) 211-2454 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. CT. While these reports are very helpful, safety is always the first priority. Please do not go back to a damaged building to get information. Our main goal is to begin the information gathering process and ensure we can contact residents who have relocated due to flooding.

Nebraskans are doing an outstanding job, and I want to commend our residents on the proactive way they are responding. I also want to acknowledge the incredible work by the state and local personnel involved in flood preparations across Nebraska. Our state is very resilient and I know that we will get through this challenge together. Thank you.