

State Representative
Cliff Bentz
House District 60

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Representative Bentz & Senator Ferrioli Request Declaration of A Snow & Flood Emergency in Malheur County

SALEM—Representative Cliff Bentz (R-Ontario) and Senator Ted Ferrioli (R-John Day) have officially requested that Governor Kate Brown declare a State of Emergency in Malheur County.

Rep. Bentz said, “Following conversations with constituents, the Malheur County Judge Dan Joyce, and Ontario Mayor Ron Verini, I asked Sen. Ferrioli to join me in a meeting with Governor Kate Brown this morning, held for the purpose of requesting that Malheur County be declared a disaster area. I have received a number of additional requests for assistance in managing challenges presented by the 30 inches or more of snow blanketing the Treasure Valley.”

“While in Governor Brown’s office, I asked if we could contact Judge Joyce and Sheriff Brian Wolfe directly. The Governor’s staff made contact, placed them on the Governor’s speaker phone, and the Governor listened to their description of the problems facing the County. She immediately instructed her staff to coordinate a response with the Office of Emergency Management and with Governor Butch Otter’s office in the State of Idaho,” said Rep. Bentz.

“I want to thank our Governor for her concern and willingness to help with the challenges facing Malheur County.”

Declaring a State of Emergency for the County will allow the State of Oregon to allocate additional resources to the assist Malheur County in their snow containment and ice removal efforts.

According to measurements taken at the OSU Malheur Experiment Station, Malheur County received more than 26 inches of snow between December 1st and January 5th. With road closures (currently I-84 and Highway 20), stores closing because of fear of roof collapse (Walmart & Albertsons), with rapidly diminishing supplies of salt and ice melt (not to mention snow shovels and snow rakes—the supply of which is apparently completely exhausted), and water backing up behind ice dams, Malheur County faces real and dangerous challenges. It is hoped that help can be found to remove the ice dams, prepare for flooding, and restore access to county and state highways.

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