

Press Release

For Immediate Release:

Thursday, February 20, 2020

Gov. Holcomb Pledges Support for Eroding Lake Michigan Shoreline

INDIANAPOLIS – Governor Eric J. Holcomb announced he signed an executive order directing state agencies to pursue collection of damage information that could lead to a declaration of disaster emergency along the Lake Michigan shoreline. He also outlined steps state agencies will take to provide assistance along the shoreline. The executive order is attached.

Gov. Holcomb surveyed the Lake Michigan shoreline via Indiana State Police helicopter on Sunday and observed conditions along the entire shoreline including Beverly Shores, Ogden Dunes, Portage and Long Beach.

“Our administration has been monitoring the erosion along the Lake Michigan shoreline but I wanted to see the damage firsthand,” Gov. Holcomb said. “I signed an executive order to initiate new action steps and further express our dedication to preserving one of our state’s crown jewels for all those who live, work and play along the shoreline.”

The executive order calls for:

- Indiana Department of Homeland Security to immediately notify the Office of the Governor if the damage criteria, set by the federal government, is met to allow the State of Indiana to apply for federal disaster assistance so the Governor can issue an executive order declaring a disaster emergency
- IDHS to seek other federal funding, programs or assistance that may be available for short-term and long-term mitigation projects
- IDHS and Indiana Department of Natural Resources to make every effort to identify additional means, methods and ways to provide necessary and appropriate assistance
- DNR to continue to expedite its review and granting of governmental permits requested by property owners so they can initiate projects to protect their properties along the shoreline as quickly as possible
- IDHS to develop and launch a webpage to share updates and new information

The State of Indiana has already taken steps to help address and respond to the situation with coordinated efforts between IDHS and DNR. State officials have visited the affected areas on several occasions to observe the damage. DNR signed a letter of support for the Great Lakes Resiliency Study, which is an effort by Great Lakes states and federal partners to find strategies to improve the shoreline. DNR, DHS, local officials and members of Indiana’s congressional delegation have participated in training with FEMA to ensure a proper understanding of the federal Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act.

Relevant state leaders will continue to communicate and collaborate with local, state and federal partners.