

August 11, 2026, Derecho ("Storm Lucy") and Restoration Effort in Northwest Indiana

Thursday, September 17th, 2026

Storm Events

August 11th, 2026 – Storm Lucy

1. Widespread straight-line winds of 70 to more than 100 mph
2. Multiple tornadoes
3. Torrential rainfall
4. Flash flooding
5. Extensive infrastructure damage

Modified Definition of a Derecho

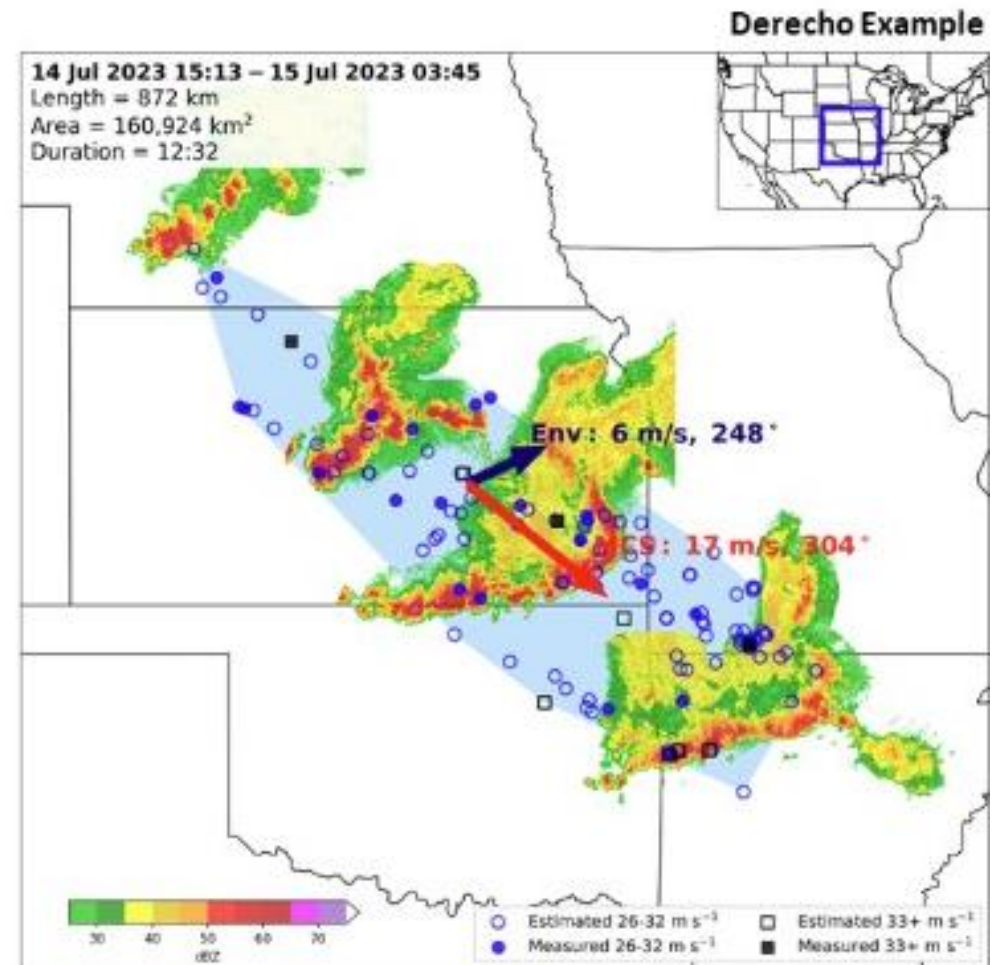
"A widespread severe windstorm characterized by a family of destructive downbursts containing multiple 75+ mph gusts associated with an extratropical, cold-pool-driven mesoscale convective system." A mesoscale convective system (MCS) produces a derecho when the following criteria are met:

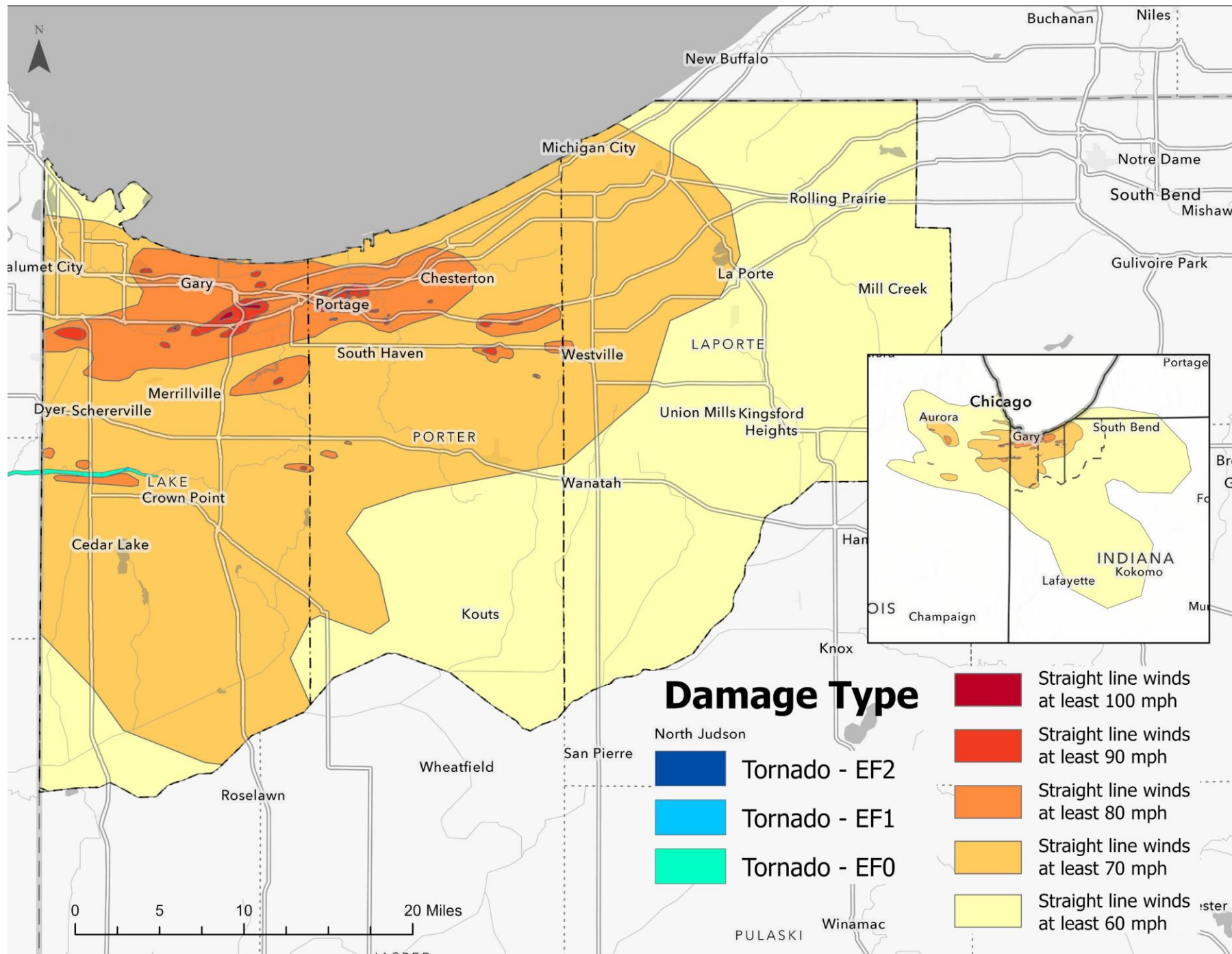
Criteria

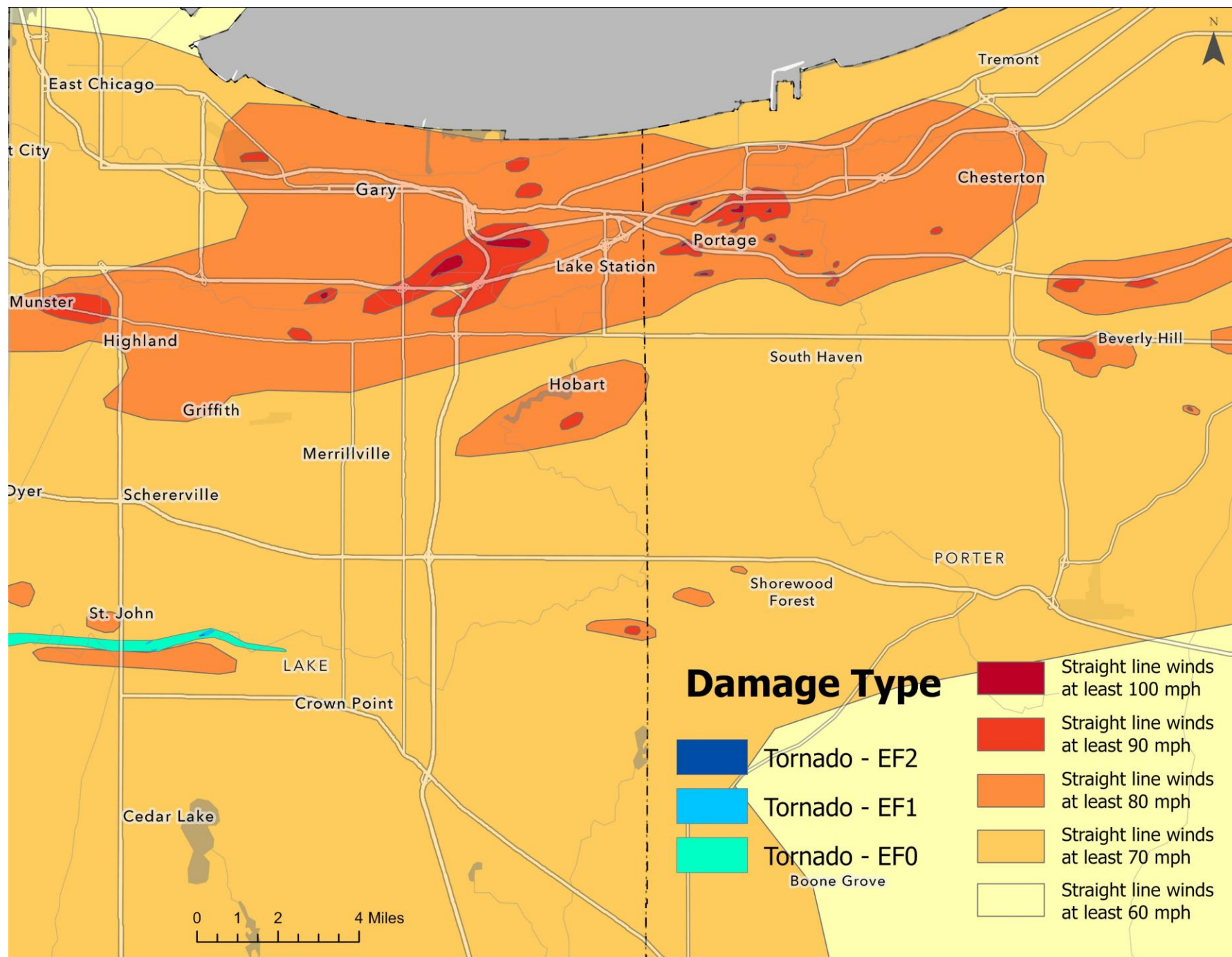
- Widespread severe reports from either wind damage or 58+ mph (50+ kts or 26 m s^{-1}) gusts (measured or estimated) comprising the wind swath all occur from the same MCS.
- The parent MCS must be at least 100 km (over 60 miles) long and last for at least 3 hours.
- All reports in the wind swath must occur in a progressive sequence.
- The parent MCS forward speed is greater than the environmental mean wind speed.
- No more than **1 hour** may elapse between reports in the wind swath.
- Spatial gaps between reports in the wind swath may not exceed 200 km (124 miles).
- The wind swath must be at least **400 km (about 250 miles)** long.
- At least **five** 75+ mph (65+ kts or 33 m s^{-1}) gust reports (measured or estimated), **separated by 80 km (50 miles)**, must occur in the 400+ km (250+ mile) long wind swath.
- At least **three** measured 75+ mph gust reports, **separated by 80 km (50 miles)**, are required in the wind swath.

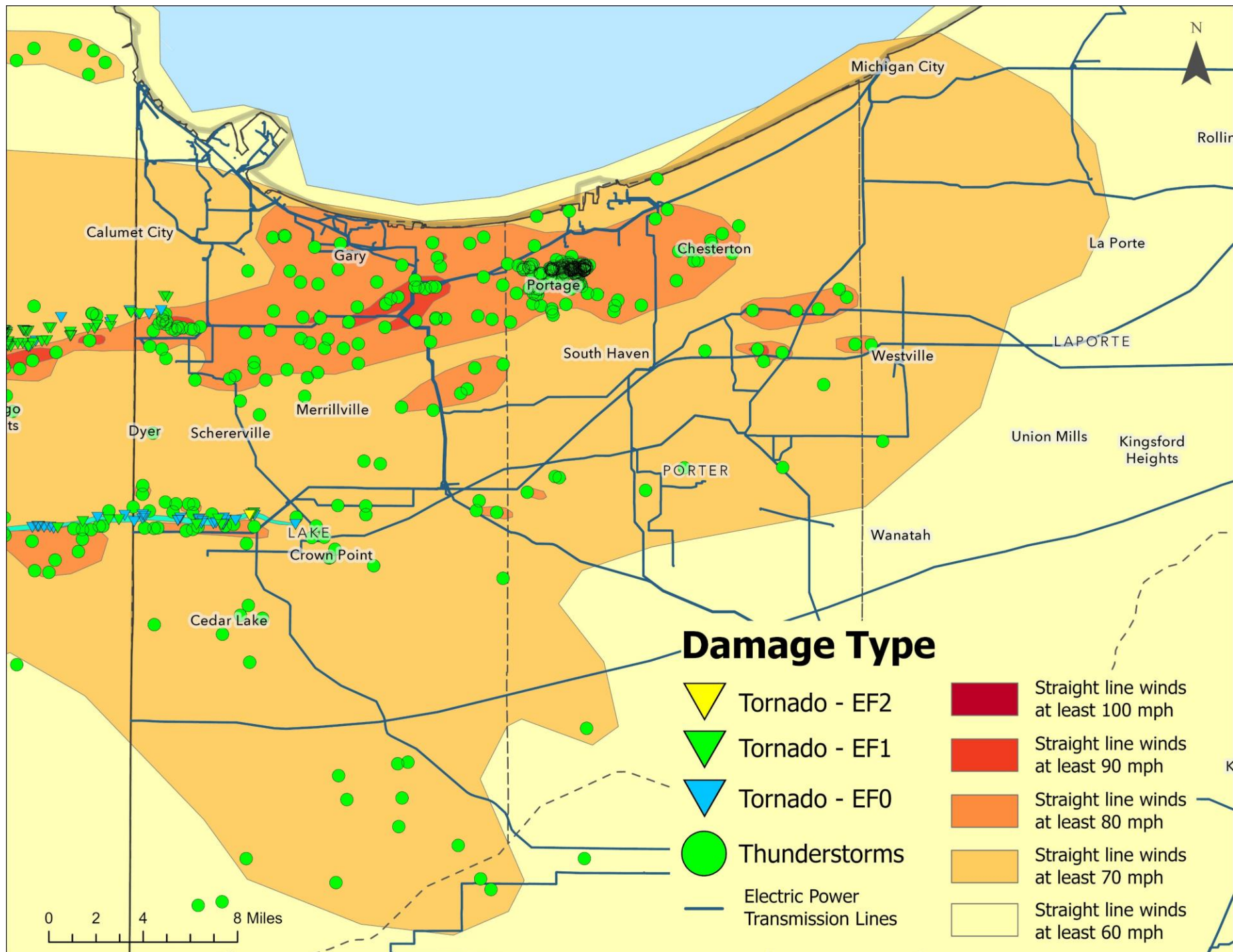
Reference

<https://journals.ametsoc.org/view/journals/bams/106/1/BAMS-D-24-0015.1.xml>









Immediate Impact

1. August 11, approximately 243,000 customers were without power.
2. As damage assessments expanded, the outage count increased to more than 301,000 affected customers, eventually reaching approximately 317,000 at peak impact.
3. Over the course of the recovery effort, total outage incidents would exceed 374,500.

Emergency Response

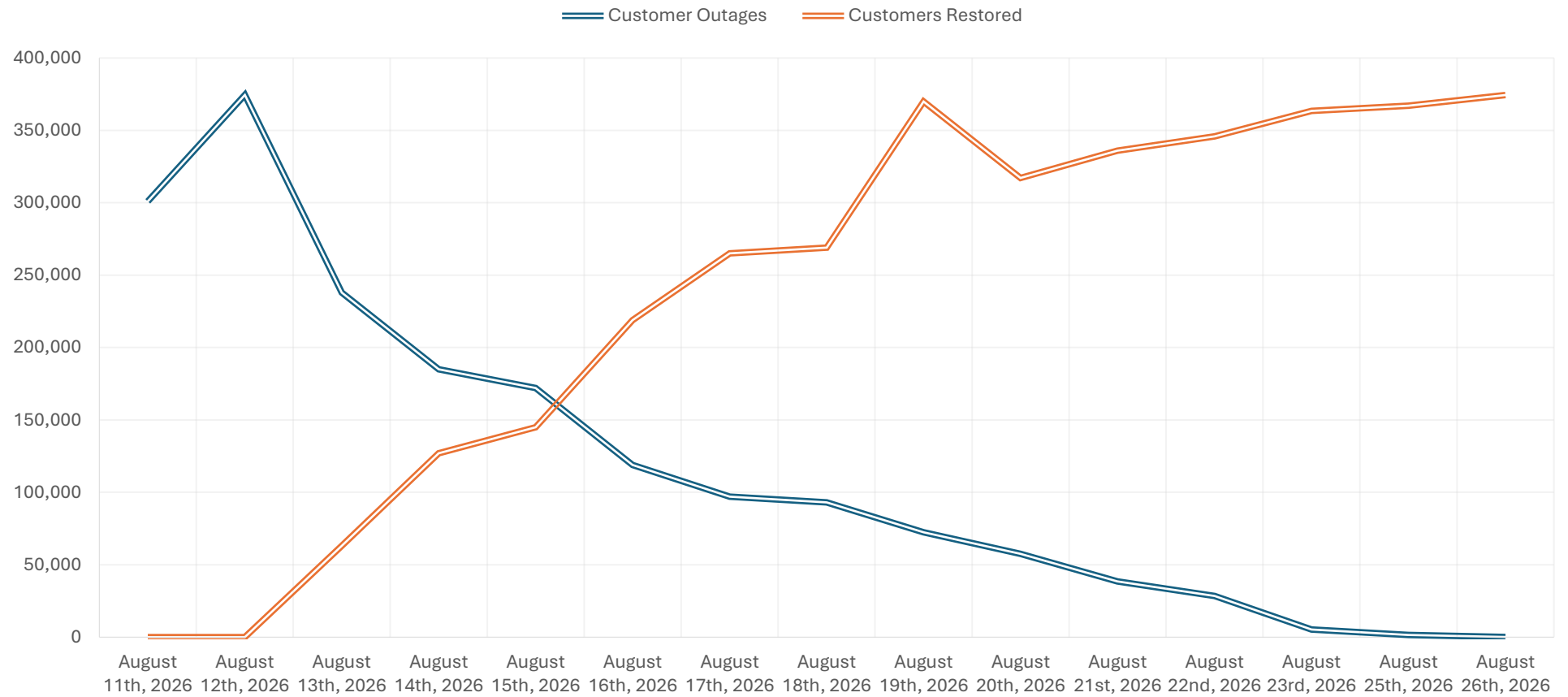
- More than 1,200 external personnel were initially deployed.
- More than 4,000 workers from 14 states ultimately participated in the restoration effort.
- The Indiana National Guard assisted with debris removal and access for utility crews.
- Vegetation management crews worked throughout the service territory to clear trees and debris before electric crews could begin repairs.



Historic August 2026 Storm Restoration Effort

Metric	Value
The Peak Customers Impacted	317,000
Total Outages	374,500+
Transmission Towers Damaged	5
Damaged Poles	1,500+
Feet of Wire Repaired/Replaced	2.1 million
Workers Mobilized	4,000+
Restoration Achievement	99% by Aug. 25

NIPSCO CUSTOMER POWER OUTAGES AND RESTORATION



Restoration Progress

Key milestones:

- August 14: 145,000 customers restored.
- August 16: 219,000 customers restored.
- August 17: Approximately 75% of affected customers restored.
- August 20: More than 317,000 customers restored.
- August 23: Nearly 358,000 customers restored.
- August 25: 99% restoration achieved.
- August 26: Restoration declared substantially complete.

Disaster Declarations

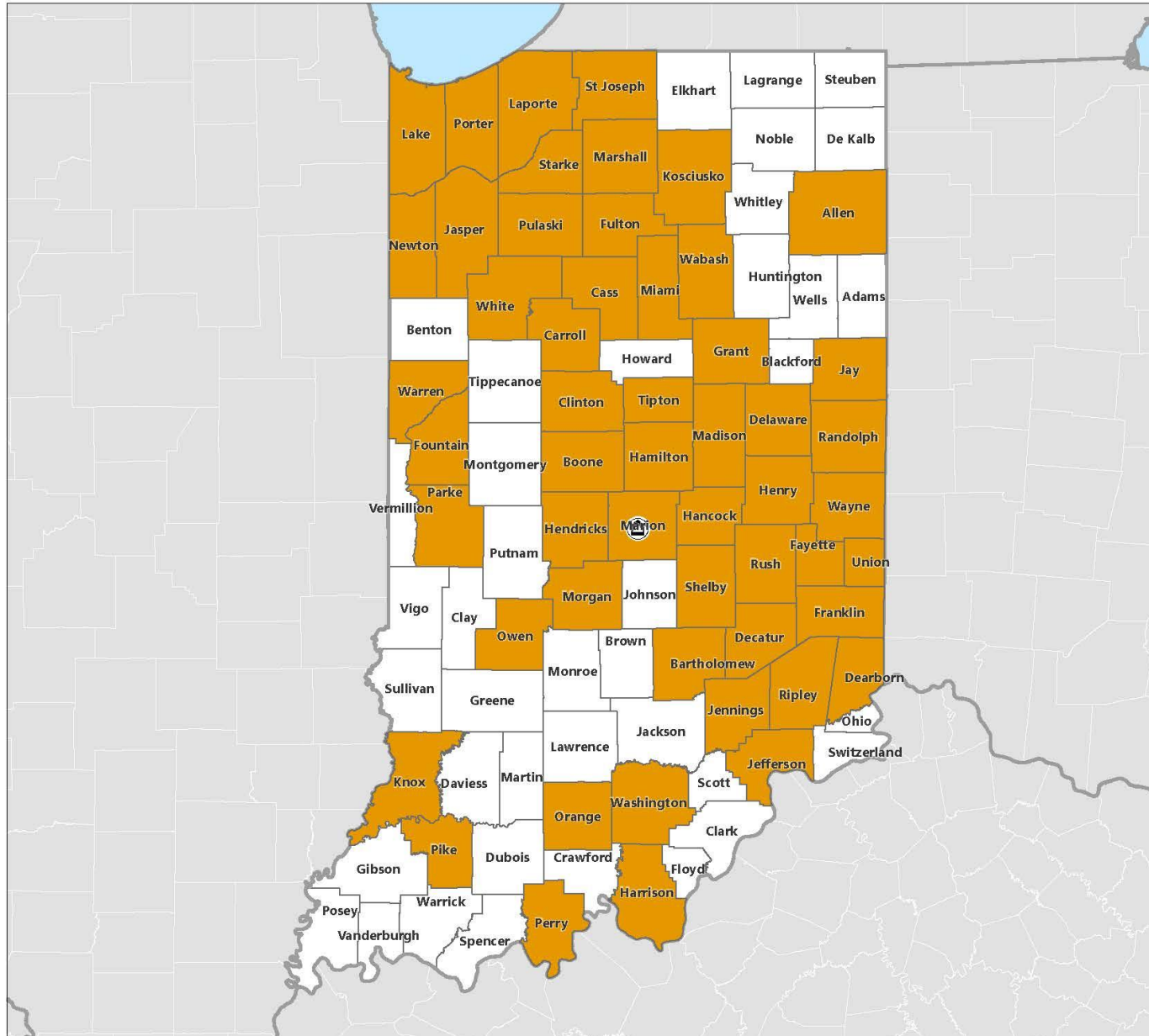
- **City of Gary Local Disaster Emergency:** Declared by Mayor Eddie Melton immediately following the August 11 storm to mobilize emergency response, infrastructure repairs, and local safety assessments.
- **Statewide Disaster Emergency:** Declared by Governor Mike Braun via Executive Order 26-21 on August 12, 2026, activating state resources and opening access to the State Disaster Relief Fund for individual assistance grants up to \$5,000 for uninsured primary residence damages.
- **Federal Emergency Declaration:** Approved by President Trump earlier on August 15, 2026, to fast-track initial federal support and emergency protective measures.

Emergency Declaration 3651 IN August 2026 - Severe Weather

Declared Counties as of 08/17/2026



FEMA



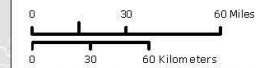
Data Layer / Map Description:
This product illustrates the counties affected by the flooding, severe storms, tornadoes, straight-line winds, and derecho occurring in the State of Indiana.

Incident Period: August 11, 2026, and continuing

State EOC (1)

County Designations:

Direct Federal Assistance (DFA),
Emergency Protective Measures
(53)

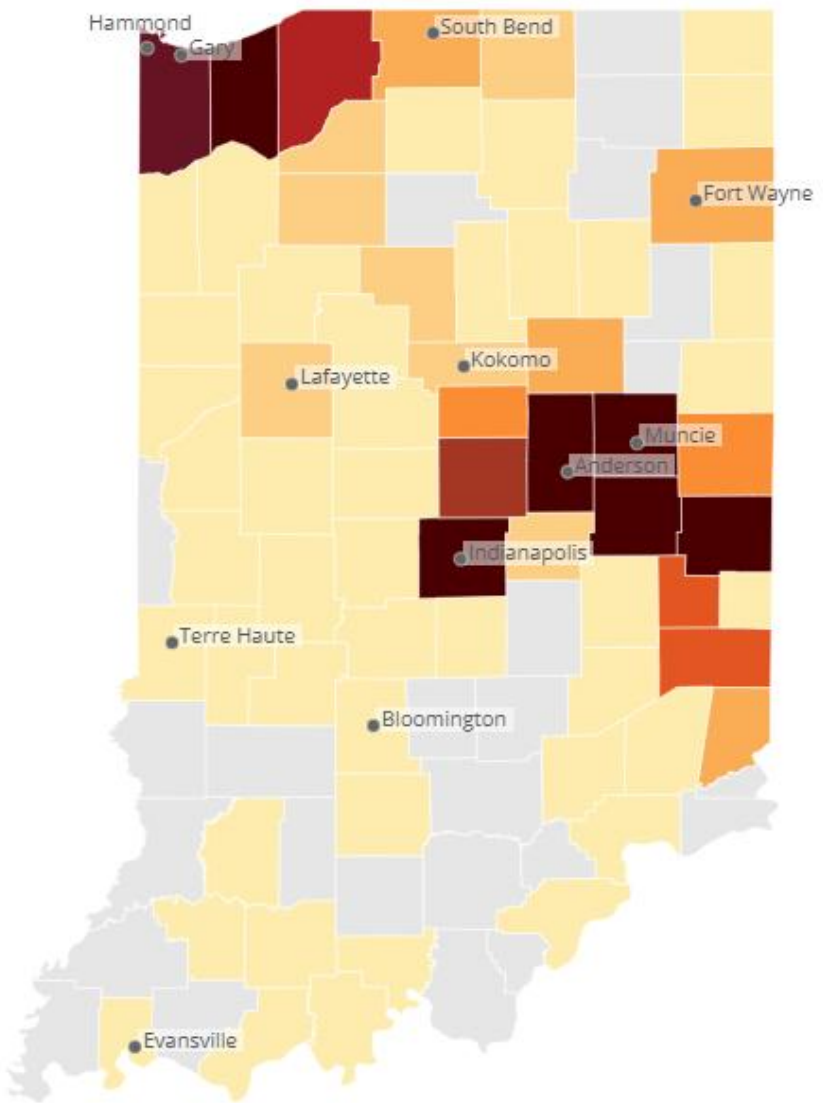


Created: Monday, August 17, 2026 | Source: FEMA
Geospatial Resource Center | FEMA Region 5

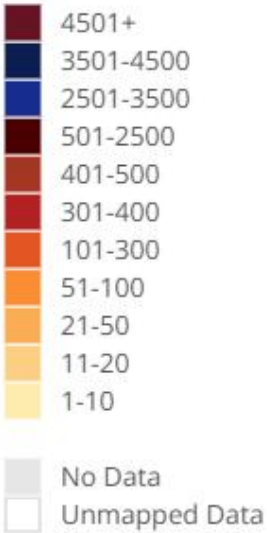
Indiana 2.1.1

Submitted Damage Reports

20,365 Total Reports



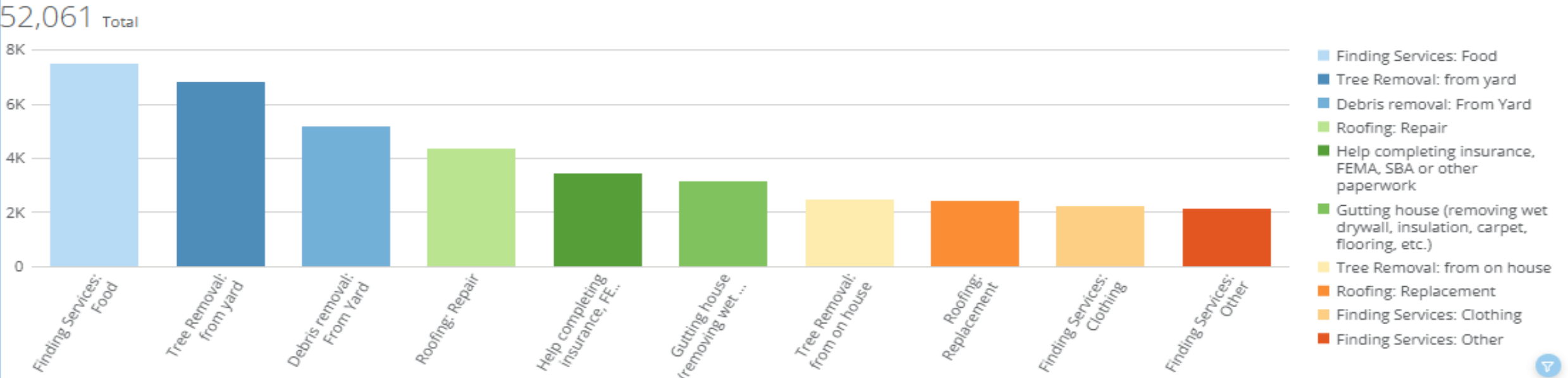
County	Disaster Report Calls
Lake County	10,601
Porter County	1,620
La Porte County	327
TOTAL:	12,548



NIRPC 3-COUNTY REGION

Indiana 2.1.1

Top 10 Disaster Needs (multiple needs per household)



LAKE COUNTY

Finding Food Services	5,884
Tree Removal: From Yard	5,214
Debris Removal: From Yard	3,899
Roofing: Repair	3,308
Help completing insurance, FEMA, SBA, or other paperwork	2,689
Gutting house (removing wet drywall, insulation, carpet, flooring, etc.)	2,526
Tree Removal: from on house	1,935
Roofing: Replacement	1,804
Finding Services: Clothing	1,765
Finding Services: Other	1,631
Total	40,233

PORTER COUNTY

Tree Removal: From Yard	973
Debris Removal: From Yard	778
Roofing: Repair	566
Finding Services: Food	543
Help completing insurance, FEMA, SBA, or other paperwork	349
Roofing: Replacement	345
Tree Removal: from on house	322
Gutting house (removing wet drywall, insulation, carpet, flooring, etc.)	272
Debris Removal: From House	253
Roofing: Tarping	241
Total	5,533

LA PORTE COUNTY

Tree Removal: From Yard	183
Finding Food Services	127
Debris Removal: From Yard	126
Roofing: Repair	100
Help completing insurance, FEMA, SBA, or other paperwork	67
Roofing: Replacement	60
Tree Removal: from on house	57
Roofing: Tarping	49
Debris Removal: From House	43
Finding Services: Other	42
Total	1,031

Community Impact

Supporting Northwest Indiana's Recovery



Communities Severely Impacted:

- Gary, Portage, Munster, Lake Station, and Hobart
- Gary alone, more than 2,000 damage sites

Residents reported:

- Going 10 to 14 days without electricity.
- Spoiled food and medications.
- Flooded basements due to disabled sump pumps.
- Dangerous heat conditions.
- Limited access to communications and internet service.

Infrastructure Affected:

- Interstate System: I-80/94 (Borman Expressway), I-90 Indiana Toll Road, I-65 Corridor
- Rail Infrastructure: South Shore Line, Norfolk Southern freight routes, CSX freight corridors, Belt Railway interconnections to Chicago
- Strategic Freight Assets: Port of Indiana-Burns Harbor, Inland logistics facilities, Distribution warehouse clusters, Intermodal freight terminals

Government & Public Response

State and local officials pushed for greater accountability as restoration timelines extended beyond initial expectations in some communities.

Actions included:

- Federal emergency assistance approvals through FEMA.
- Calls by Governor Mike Braun for investigations into utility preparedness and vegetation management practices.
- Formal requests by Congressman Frank Mrvan for federal review of the outage event and restoration response.
- Recovery action plans proposed by Mayor Eddie Melton, including customer credits, reimbursement assistance, and long-term grid investments.

Community Response

Regional & National Relief Organizations

- **United Way of Northwest Indiana:** \$500,000 disaster relief fund to provide direct financial aid to households navigating and unexpected expenses.
- **American Red Cross** (Northwest Chapter): Provided immediate emergency shelter, disaster assessments, and core relief services.
- **The Salvation Army** (Northwest Indiana Area Command): Deployed its Emergency Disaster Services (EDS) teams to set up mobile feeding units and centralized sites (such as at Portage High School)
- **Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Gary:** Distributed direct funding for food replacement, insurance deductibles, essential home and appliance repairs, and rental or mortgage assistance across Lake, Porter, and LaPorte counties.

Community Foundations & Local Facilitators

- **Legacy Foundation:** Committed up to \$1,000,000 to launch the City of Gary Derecho Emergency Household Assistance Program, targeting rapid direct financial relief to the hardest-hit households.
- **CoAction** (Northwest Indiana Community Action): Acted as the primary administrator for the Gary emergency fund, processing applications and connecting families to long-term utility stabilization and housing support.
- **Porter County Community Foundation:** Stewarded and distributed \$600,000 in collaborative funding directly to 14 frontline local non-profits, including Family Promise of Porter County, Porter County Aging and Community Services, and Meals on Wheels of Northwest Indiana.
- **Unity Foundation of La Porte County:** Allocated a \$400,000 grant to manage localized infrastructure recovery, basic needs, and property cleanup efforts within La Porte County.
- **Food Bank of Northwest Indiana:** Ramped up regional distribution alongside local pantries (like the Hilltop Food Pantry and Portage Township Food Pantry) to address mass food spoilage caused by the historic utility outages.
- **Northwest Indiana Food Council and World Central Kitchen (WCK):** executed a uniquely coordinated food relief strategy. Initially, they focused on hot meal distribution during the massive power outages, and later transitioned into providing fresh produce markets once residential power was restored.