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WIN SUPERBOWL

Mansfield shelter-in-place

lifted, cars cleared after

freight train derailment

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Cleanup operations after a freight train derailed in Mansfield Depot on Thursday have made “considerable progress,” town officials said. The shelter-in-place order for the area has been lifted and affected railcars have been removed from the Willimantic River.

“A couple of the cars that could be up righted and put back on the tracks have been put back on the tracks,” John Roache, Mansfield’s fire chief, said on Saturday. “They’re in a cornfield...so they’re stabilized.”

The derailment happened on Thursday morning near the Eagleville Pond and involved a New England Central Railroad (NECR) consist with 41 cars and two locomotives, according to officials. 10 cars derailed and landed on their sides, six of which were carrying liquid propane fuel. Several cars fell into the Willimantic River.

No injuries were reported and no leaks were detected from the

cars containing propane, according to officials. However, a spill of food-grade grease had to be mitigated.

Stafford Road, also known as Connecticut Route 32, will remain closed to motorists between South Eagleville Road and Route 44 East for the week, Roache said, but residents will have access to their homes.

“While everything is safe and stable right now, there is always the potential of an accident or something happening,” he said. “So we ask people to maintain a safe distance away from [the scene]. If you can see the railcars, you’re probably a little too close.”

At the briefing, Mansfield Mayor Antonia Moran expressed gratitude for the support provided by local first responders and state agencies through the cleanup.

“It’s not a simple project,” she said. “People worked long hours in the snow and the cold, and so they needed shelter, they needed food, they needed respite, they needed warmth...The support and, well, just plain help, came from all directions.”

The NECR freight train involved in the derailment originated in Palmer, Mass. and was en route southbound toward Willimantic. Officials are investigating to determine a specific cause.



Derailed train cars in Mansfield, Conn. A New England Central Railroad (NECR) freight train derailed in Mansfield this past Thursday, and cleanup has taken place since.

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GOVERNOR LAMONT ALLOCATES

EMERGENCY FUNDS FOR CRITI-

CAL STATE RESPONSE

by Keren Salazar Mercado | CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT | peu25001@uconn.edu

Gov. Ned Lamont announced a supplemental plan to tap Connecticut’s Emergency State Response Reserve, citing federal funding reductions and delays that his office said threaten “essential health and human services supports that residents of Connecticut depend on for their most basic needs.”

According to the press release from the Office of Gov. Ned Lamont, the proposal prioritizes tax relief and sustainable funding for essential state services, including a \$500 million rebate that would provide qualifying residents with payments of up to \$400. The plan also seeks to reduce a proposed hospital tax increase and eliminate certain licensing fees to ease financial burdens.

According to The Connecticut Mirror, the current budget keeps investment levels on track for K-12 public schools and public social services, though public universities may need to rely on their own financial reserves due to limited increases in state aid. The Mirror also reported that Lamont’s blueprint aims to balance the state’s fiscal requirements while staying narrowly within legal spending limits.

According to NBC Connecticut, as the 2026 legislative session opens, Lamont is prioritizing financial relief for residents, including a proposed one-time tax rebate funded by state surplus reserves. The outlet reported that while the executive branch is focused on immediate affordability measures, lawmakers are expected to address broader systemic costs such as property tax burdens, rising utility bills and education funding for local school districts.

In addition to discussing fiscal policy, the legislative session will cover contemporary regulatory issues like data privacy and artificial intelligence, as well as discussions regarding the governor’s ongoing emergency expenditure powers. NBC Connecticut reported that lawmakers are weighing how to balance direct financial relief with legislative oversight to maintain the state’s long-term fiscal stability.

As the legislative session progresses, the success of Lamont’s proposal remains tethered to a delicate bipartisan negotiation. While the Governor’s office frames the \$500 million rebate as an essential lifeline against federal austerity, some others in the General Assembly have expressed caution. Lawmakers argue that depleting the Emergency State Response Reserve could leave Connecticut vulnerable should federal funding delays persist in the next fiscal year.

Ahead of the Feb. 5 House session, House Democratic leaders addressed reporters at the Capitol to defend what they described as a short-term



The Governor of Connecticut, Ned Lamont speaking at a press conference. Lamont is the 89th governor of Connecticut. PHOTO COURTESY OF @GOVNEDLAMONT ON INSTAGRAM

funding bridge designed to respond to “unexpected” federal budget cuts, according to Connecticut Network.

Republicans criticized the move as “off-budget spending,” a characterization Lamont’s team rejected, saying the proposal is “an expenditure, not a revenue grab.” The funds were not originally expected to be part of the state budget but are necessary to “lean against” sudden federal cuts, emphasizing the state’s responsibility to act quickly when services deemed “critical” are at risk.

Adding that, the administration said it is focused on ensuring Connecticut can “respond in a timely manner” to protect families most directly affected by federal funding instability. It stressed that the reserve is intended to provide a “quick turnaround” and function as “a temporary bridge,” not a permanent solution. It also expressed a desire to work “collaboratively” with Republicans, stating that the administration’s primary goal is to provide “stability and predictability” for Connecticut residents during an uncertain fiscal period, according to Connecticut Network.



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