


SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2025




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# ‘Feeling helpless’ after floods

Deluge leaves thousands displaced in region even as rivers recede



KAREN DUCEY / THE SEATTLE TIMES  
Mario Rincon holds his son, Daniel, 2, on Friday outside their home, now surrounded by floodwater from the Skagit River in Burlington. Shortly after midnight Friday, the Skagit River at Mount Vernon crested at record 37.7 feet, surpassing the previous record set 35 years ago.

*Seattle Times staff*

Mario Rincon stood outside his home with his 2-year-old son, Daniel, in his arms. The boy, unaware of the grim situation, kept asking to swim in the floodwaters. Rincon soon would put on waders himself to see the damage inside his flooded home.

Western Washington rivers receded Friday from the catastrophic levels reached earlier this week while thousands, like Rincon and his family, remained displaced from their devastated towns, flooded under feet of water.

Rincon slept for only two hours Thursday night, worrying that his Burlington, Skagit County, home had flooded.

The worst had happened by the time he checked his cameras early Friday morning. Three feet of water inundated the bottom level of his home, pouring into his garage, office and a family room he’d almost finished building.

“It’s frustrating. We’re feeling helpless watching the water and not being able to do anything,” Rincon said. He stayed at a

casino hotel with his family the night before. “It’s not something I want anyone to experience.”

But maybe the timing was all for a reason, Rincon said. His wife was laid up at the casino hotel Friday, recovering from a C-section just over a week ago. She was originally scheduled for the operation

See > **FLOODING, A6**

## Trump grants state emergency request, unlocking federal help with recovery

By JIM BRUNNER  
*Seattle Times political reporter*

President Donald Trump granted Washington’s request for an emergency declaration in response to this week’s devastating flooding, unlocking federal help with the state’s initial recovery.

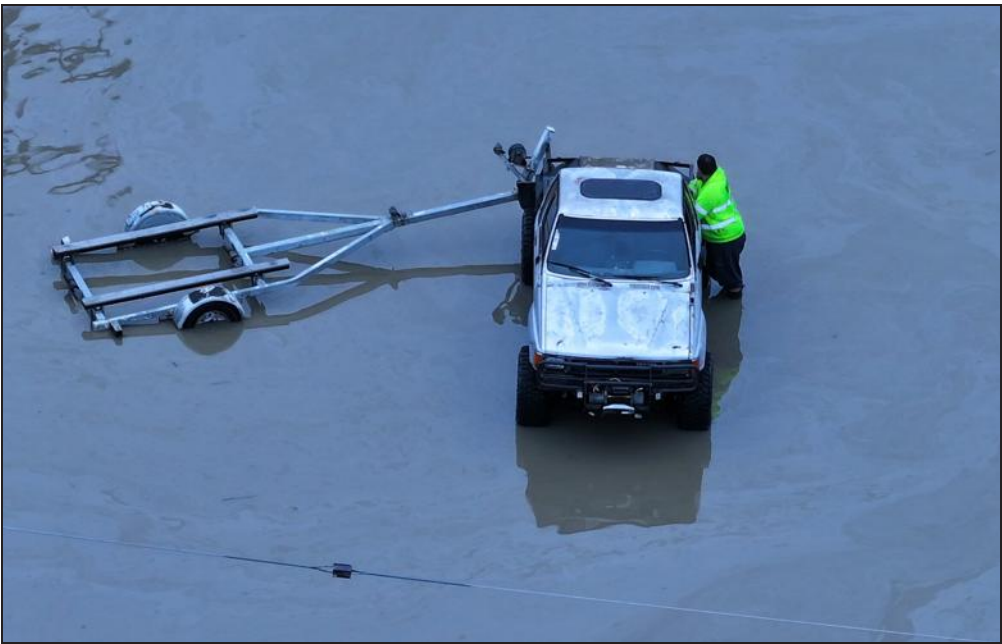
Gov. Bob Ferguson praised the president’s decision for immediate help but cautioned it does not guarantee federal dollars will be forthcoming for individual flood victims or to help rebuild damaged roads.

Ferguson said he received a phone call Friday from Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem informing him of Trump’s quick decision to sign Washington’s request for a federal emergency declaration.

While Washington leaders have repeatedly clashed with Trump — including on past denials and delays in disaster aid — Ferguson and other state and local officials sounded a grateful note during a Friday news conference at a levee along the Green River in Tukwila.

Ferguson described Noem’s phone call as gracious and the type of bipartisan cooperation the public expects in a crisis. “She asked how we were doing here in Washington state. I just deeply appreciate

See > **EMERGENCY, A3**



KAREN DUCEY / THE SEATTLE TIMES  
James Richardson from Sumas tries to restart his truck Friday. When it stalled, he off-loaded a boat that had been on the trailer and took that the rest of the way home.

## How Skagit Valley endured a record flood but escaped dire predictions

By GREG KIM, CONRAD SWANSON AND BRENDAN KILEY  
*Seattle Times staff reporters*

SKAGIT COUNTY — The sun set Thursday over the soggy and worried people of Western Washington while the fast-running Skagit River, full of sediment and debris, swelled.

More than 78,000 people throughout the flood plain, including the low-lying communities of Mount Vernon and Burlington, had

See > **SKAGIT, A4**

## King County IDs areas at elevated landslide risk

By REBECCA MOSS AND MANUEL VILLA  
*Seattle Times staff reporters*

Much of Western Washington is now considered at high risk for landslides after days of near-constant rainfall.

In the past 72 hours alone, more than 6 inches of rain fell in Marblemount, Skagit County, and Snoqualmie Falls. Over 8 inches fell in Auburn and Stampede Pass near Interstate 90. The Seattle area has seen over 4 inches accumulate in the past week.

See > **SLIDE RISK, A5**

### MORE INSIDE

- Remote town of Stehekin sees ‘staggering’ damage > **A3**
- Immigrants face extra challenges in flood response > **A5**
- Livestock owners find needed community > **A9**

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