

4 dead in worst Michigan tornados since 1980 as Democrat Whitmer deflects responsibility

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On March 6 a supercell storm system in lower Michigan spawned four tornadoes. An EF-1 tornado touched down near Edwardsburg, Michigan and traveled northeast for 13 miles. The tornado struck a home, causing injuries that led to the death of 12-year-old Silas Anderson.

According to a report in the *Detroit News*, first responders were dispatched to the 6800 block of Conrad Road in Milton Township, near the Indiana state line, after a caller reported they could not find their son following the tornado. A next-door neighbor told WVPE Public Radio in Elkhart, Indiana, that the boy was in his garage when the ceiling fell on him.

Family and school officials describe Silas as a bright, much-loved member of the Edwardsburg Public Schools community. His death has become a focal point of public outrage over the lack of advance tornado warnings that day. His parents, through statements shared by their pastor, have emphasized both their devastation and their gratitude for the outpouring of support, while also asking for privacy as the community discussions about the warning failures continue.

Beginning at 3:49 pm, an EF-2 tornado with max wind speeds of 130 miles per hour traveled 12 miles through Three Rivers, Michigan, damaging numerous homes and businesses. The tornado tore the roof off a Menards retail store as customers and workers attempted to shelter under a mezzanine inside after receiving tornado warnings on their smartphones minutes before it hit.

An EF-1 (Enhanced Fujita Scale) tornado has winds of 86-110 mph, an EF-2 has winds of 111-135 mph, and an EF-3 has winds of 136-165 mph.

Local media ABC57 spoke to Levi Spokes, who was shopping with his grandmother when their phones started beeping with the tornado warning. They were unable to get to the shelter before the tornado hit the building.

“We were, you know, going that way. And then the front area, some more of the roof rips off and I looked behind at my grandma, and the back-end’s ripping open. Stuff’s just tumbling everywhere. Stuff’s flying right behind my grandma, and then in front of us, we’re dodging stuff in front of us,” said Stokes.

Over five days, storms in Oklahoma, Michigan, Illinois and Indiana spawned more than 20 tornadoes, resulting in 11 deaths, at least 20 injuries and significant damage or destruction to hundreds of buildings.

On March 5, an EF-2 tornado west of Fairview, Oklahoma killed 47-year-old Jodie Owens and her 13-year-old daughter Lexi Owens when it struck their vehicle. Reports indicate that the mother was on the phone with two of her other children warning them to take shelter when the vehicle was hit and the call cut out.

On March 6, an EF-3 tornado cut a path of destruction for almost seven miles through Beggs, Oklahoma. It began at the town’s middle and high school, damaging the roofs, before heading northeast. It reached a width of 950 yards wide with winds peaking at 140 miles per hour, at which point it struck and destroyed a mobile home, killing 59-year-old Todd McClellan and his wife 63-year-old Becky McClellan. Their son, living at a different house on the property, was injured. The four deaths set a record in Oklahoma for the most ever in March.

On March 10, a storm system in northeast Illinois and northwest Indiana generated hail up to six inches in diameter and multiple tornadoes. An EF-3 tornado with peak winds of 150 miles per hour began in Kankakee, Illinois at the Kankakee Fairgrounds and headed northeast for 36 miles. It passed through Aroma Park, Illinois where 65-year-old Maurice Norington was killed from damage to his home. It ended in Lake Village, Indiana where it razed the home of 84-year-old Jane Kozlowski and her husband 89-year-old Ed Kozlowski, killing them both.

The tornadoes in Michigan were the deadliest since 1980, when a twister went through downtown Kalamazoo killing five people.

A worker at American Axle Manufacturing in Three Rivers, Michigan, which employs 1,100 workers, spoke about the experience at the plant during the recent tornado. She said that the company shut down for 40 minutes and crammed all the workers in a small area with windows all around.

At 4:33 pm an EF-3 tornado began south of Athens, Michigan with max wind speeds of 160 miles per hour and a maximum width of 500 yards, traveling northeast five miles to Union City, Michigan. It traveled along the north shore of Union Lake, razing multiple homes, damaging numerous buildings and injuring 12 people.

Among those killed were 65-year old Penni Jo Guthrie, 54-year-old Keri Ann Johnson, and 63-year-old William Andrew Akers when each of their manufactured homes were “lofted and tossed,” according to the NWS (National Weather Service).

The fact that tornado sirens did not sound and the NWS did not issue a tornado warning is a significant factor in the death toll. In the aftermath of the deadly weather event, every level of government is seeking to avoid responsibility for the lack of preparedness and inability to warn the public about the approaching danger.

Two days after the storm, Democratic Governor of Michigan Gretchen Whitmer released a video following a helicopter tour of the damage and, through her spokeswoman Stacey LaRouche, pointed the finger at the Trump administration for the tornado deaths. LaRouche said, “While tornadoes can be hard to predict, the federal government should investigate whether the failure to issue a watch was related to

federal cuts.”

While it is true that the NWS Storm Prediction Center did not issue a tornado warning for the southwest area of Michigan, it is also true that outdoor warning sirens in Michigan are controlled by counties and local municipalities.

The NWS is claiming that warnings were issued, but that no broader tornado watch was put out in advance for southwest Michigan. The official NWS position is that the environment was assessed as low probability and very isolated, but a surprise high-end supercell formed along a warm front.

The NWS claim that warnings were issued as the tornado threat became evident on radar, but there was no earlier watch and only a few minutes of effective warning were provided in the hardest-hit locations.

Meanwhile, local officials have been saying that responsibility for failing to sound the tornado siren was caused by a planned statewide annual voluntary drill scheduled for March 18 during Severe Weather Awareness Week. This is an absurd argument because the March 6 siren and watch failures arose from forecasting, NWS decision-making, and local siren policies, not from any drill schedule.

Independent radar analyses suggests at least one fatal tornado may have already been on the ground by the time the first warning went out, highlighting how fast the storm “spun up” and how short the lead time was. This raises the question of the unprecedented intensity and speed of the storms today—driven by climate change—and the fact that the present level of technology and data analysis among meteorologists is incapable of responding rapidly enough to developing supercells.

While local, state and federal officials are treating the March 6 event in Michigan as unusually serious, there have been previous tornadoes in Michigan with no advance warning given and limited or no siren coverage in the affected area.

On March 10, Whitmer traveled to the White House to meet with President Donald Trump, ostensibly to brief him on the deadly tornadoes. A statement from LaRouche referenced the tornadoes only in one sentence. “The governor gave an update on the deadly tornadoes that hit southwest Michigan on Friday.” The rest of the statement regarded appealing for further disaster assistance for a 2025 ice storm in Northern Michigan and other investments in Michigan.

Then Whitmer moved on to military matters, with LaRouche saying, “Michigan looks forward to welcoming new fighter jets to Selfridge, which will strengthen our national security, boost base readiness, and protect thousands of jobs in Macomb County.”

Whitmer’s groveling before Donald Trump amidst the escalating war against Iran is particularly revealing considering his role in stoking far-right hostility to her pandemic measures and providing political cover for militia groups. In 2020, the armed Wolverine Watchmen conspiracy planned to kidnap and execute Whitmer. Three of the men were convicted for providing material support for a terrorist act and are currently serving prison sentences of 7 to 12 years.

Since securing commitments from Trump, Whitmer has stopped calling for an investigation into the lack of a tornado watch before the March 6 storm.

The Trump administration’s assault on federal workers in 2025 resulted in a net decrease of 10 percent of the US government workforce. This process was spearheaded by Elon Musk, the richest man in the world, who led the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) before a personal falling out with Trump.

DOGE-mandated layoffs and hiring freezes left NWS offices understaffed by 20-30 percent in critical forecasting roles, radar maintenance and data analysis. Overall funding of the parent organization of NWS (NOAA) dropped 14-30 percent from 2025 levels, hitting weather satellites (\$209 million cut), climate research labs (\$53 million cut) and cooperative institutes that support NWS models.

Cuts also terminated contracts for next-gen satellites and research on severe storms, weakening real-time monitoring and predictive tools like those used for tornado detection.

The number of tornadoes annually reported by the NWS since 1950 has steadily increased over time. Simultaneously, the number of fatalities has trended downwards. This is due to significant scientific advances in meteorology in the last century.

The National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR), founded in 1960, has played a major role in performing science that has led to meteorological advances and increased understanding of the link between climate change and the increasing prevalence and severity of extreme weather.

Supercomputers at NCAR operate complex models that forecast hurricanes, track wildfire smoke and project rising sea levels and floods.

In December 2025, the Trump administration labeled NCAR as a source of “climate alarmism” and announced plans to dismantle it. The *New York Times* reports that proposals under consideration include moving the supercomputer to the University of Wyoming and shifting a space weather lab to a private company. Nearly 900 scientists and engineers work at the NCAR headquarters in Boulder, Colorado.

Julie Lundquist, Professor of Atmospheric Science and Wind Energy at John Hopkins University condemned the move. She said, “This is a terrible move to make at any time, particularly now that we’ve just had the third hottest year on record and need to better grasp what’s coming our way.”

Lundquist continued, “Like many atmospheric scientists in the US, I consider NCAR the single-most vital resource for scientists working to understand and predict Earth’s atmosphere and weather. Losing NCAR would kneecap our ability to do important work to understand severe storms, flash floods, drought, air quality, wildfires, and weather prediction.”

The Trump administration is systematically attacking science and destroying critical departments such as those involved in weather prediction. The response of the Democrats is in line with the party’s response to the criminal wars abroad and the violations of constitutional rights at home. The Democrats issue statements and posture as opponents while simultaneously providing the votes needed to fund the Trump administration’s assault on science and buildup of the US military war machine.



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