

California – Severe Storms, Flooding, and Debris and Mud Flows

Denial of Appeal

Denied on August 4, 2011

On April 22, 2011, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. requested a major disaster declaration due to a series of storms bringing snowstorms, heavy rain, high winds, flooding and flows of debris and mud during the period of March 15-27, 2011. The Governor requested Public Assistance for 17 counties and Hazard Mitigation statewide. On June 21, 2011, the Governor's request was denied. On July 13, 2011, Governor Brown appealed the denial. During the period of April 19-22, 2011, joint federal, state, and local government Preliminary Damage Assessments (PDAs) were conducted in the requested counties and are summarized below. PDAs estimate damages immediately after an event and are considered, along with several other factors, in determining whether a disaster is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the state and the affected local governments, and that federal assistance is necessary.¹

On July 13, 2011, the Governor's appeal for a major disaster declaration was denied based on the determination that the damage was not of such severity and magnitude as to be beyond the combined capabilities of the state, affected local governments, and voluntary agencies. Furthermore, it was determined that the damage to the infrastructure was a result of three separate storms systems that occurred on March 14-16; March 17-22; and March 23-27, 2011. Additionally, the individual storms that produced high winds and/or rainfall affected different parts of the State at different times.²

Summary of Damage Assessment Information Used in Determining Whether to Declare a Major Disaster

Individual Assistance - (*Not requested*)

- Total Number of Residences Impacted:³ -
 - Destroyed - -
 - Major Damage - -
 - Minor Damage - -
 - Affected - -

- Percentage of insured residences:⁴ -
- Percentage of low income households:⁵ -
- Percentage of elderly households:⁶ -
- Total Individual Assistance cost estimate: N/A

Public Assistance

- Primary Impact: Damage to roads and bridges
- Total Public Assistance cost estimate: \$44,547,342
- Statewide per capita impact:⁷ \$1.32
- Statewide per capita impact indicator:⁸ \$1.30
- Countywide per capita impact: Alameda County (\$0.63), Amador County (\$42.14), Butte County (\$0.38), Contra Costa County (\$0.02), Del Norte County (\$24.18), Humboldt County (\$30.19), Madera County (\$3.85), Mariposa County (\$18.50), Mendocino County (\$59.66), Monterey County (\$6.77), Santa Barbara County (\$18.87), Santa Cruz County (\$51.38), Sierra County (\$128.83), Stanislaus County (\$0.84), Sutter County (\$63.20), Trinity County (\$41.08), Tuolumne County (\$8.59)
- Countywide per capita impact indicator:⁹ \$3.27

¹ The Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) process is a mechanism used to determine the impact and magnitude of damage and resulting needs of individuals, businesses, public sector, and community as a whole. Information collected is used by the State as a basis for the Governor's request for a major disaster or emergency declaration, and by the President in determining a response to the Governor's request (44 CFR § 206.33).

² When a Governor's request for major disaster assistance under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended (Stafford Act) is under review, a number of primary factors are considered to determine whether assistance is warranted. These factors are outlined in FEMA's regulations (44 CFR § 206.48). The President has ultimate discretion and decision making authority to declare major disasters and emergencies under the Stafford Act (42 U.S.C. § 5170 and § 5191).

³ Degree of damage to impacted residences:

- Destroyed – total loss of structure, structure is not economically feasible to repair, or complete failure to major structural components (e.g., collapse of basement walls/foundation, walls or roof);
- Major Damage – substantial failure to structural elements of residence (e.g., walls, floors, foundation), or damage that will take more than 30 days to repair;
- Minor Damage – home is damaged and uninhabitable, but may be made habitable in short period of time with repairs; and
- Affected – some damage to the structure and contents, but still habitable.

⁴ By law, federal disaster assistance cannot duplicate insurance coverage (44 CFR § 206.48(b)(5)).

⁵ Special populations, such as low-income, the elderly, or the unemployed may indicate a greater need for assistance (44 CFR § 206.48(b)(3)).

⁶ Ibid (44 CFR § 206.48(b)(3)).

⁷ Based on State population in the 2010 Census.

⁸ Statewide Per Capita Impact Indicator for FY11, *Federal Register*, October 1, 2010.

⁹ Countywide Per Capita Impact Indicator for FY11, *Federal Register*, October 1, 2010.