

Governor Green, Mayor Bissen, Biden-Harris Administration Officials Provide Six-month update on Maui Wildfires

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SBA Administrator Isabel Casillas Guzman and FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell Met with Local and State Officials and Survivors on Long-Term Recovery Efforts

WASHINGTON -- Today, U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Administrator Isabel Casillas Guzman and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Administrator Deanne Criswell joined Hawai'i Governor Josh Green, M.D., and Maui County Mayor Richard Bissen for a long-term recovery meeting to discuss and witness a firsthand view of the progress made on Maui. They were joined by leadership from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The streets of Lahaina are passable today, but the perimeter of the impacted area is still patrolled by National Guard troops as crews go about the work of clearing wildfire debris. Six months after wildfires tore through this historic town on Maui's west side, cranes, excavators, and bulldozers are clearing the lots. One by one, they're removing what's left of houses that burned and the melted husks of cars and pickup trucks left abandoned. Environmental crews are keeping tabs on air, water, and soil samples. FEMA continues to work closely with the state of Hawai'i, including state Coordinating Officer James Barros, as well as Maui County, and federal and nonprofit partners, to put Lahaina on a path to recovery, all while preserving its culture, land, and sense of community.

Every department of Governor Green's Administration leapt into action on wildfire response and stepped up efforts once the gravity of the devastation began to reveal itself.



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“Even before we received President Biden’s Federal Disaster Declaration six hours after our request following the wildfires, our team had been working non-stop to help our neighbors on Maui,” said **Hawai‘i Governor Josh Green**. “That includes those who were homeless before the fires, to our workforce members who rent, including first responders who lost their homes even as they evacuated and rescued their neighbors, to the longtime homeowners who lost everything, and all who lost loved ones. Our efforts now, every day, are to transition survivors’ households into long-term housing, to give them stability and a sense of normalcy,” said Governor Green. “Our Maui Recovery Fund, part of our One ‘Ohana Initiative,” will go even further to help our neighbors on a path to recovery,” Governor Green said.

An estimated 9,806 people have been displaced because of the wildfires, 3,971 properties were destroyed and 100 souls were lost in the fires.

“Thanks to our partners we were able to successfully house 7,796 individuals in the NCS program. Currently there are still 4,961 people or 2089 households, in 17 hotels, in need of housing. Our goal is to swiftly move individuals into long-term housing,” said Governor Green. “To date, we have secured 2,367 long-term rentals to house our people. There is still a need for an additional 500 units to fully house survivors of the wildfires, but we are well on track to secure housing for our people.”

“On August 8, our island and community were forever changed by the devastation of the Maui wildfires,” said **County of Maui Mayor Richard Bissen**. “As I reflect back over the last six months, I am incredibly appreciative of the continuous outpouring of aloha that we have received from across our pae ??ina and from around the world. From day one, Maui has truly felt the embrace of so many. The care and resilience of our community, paired with the support of our federal, state, and local partners through this disaster have been unwavering,” said Mayor Bissen. “As we look forward, we remain acutely focused on prioritizing the mental health and well-being of our survivors, and our shared commitment to provide a place for them to call home.”

“In the six months since the devastating Maui wildfires, the U.S. Small Business Administration has helped deliver the Biden-Harris Administration’s whole-of-government approach to Maui’s recovery by scaling up our local operations, expanding our partnerships on the ground, and offering financial relief and



technical assistance to small businesses and the communities they serve,” **said SBA Administrator Guzman**. “The SBA has directed more than \$290 million in loans to small business owners, nonprofits, homeowners, and renters seeking to rebuild their lives. We know there is still a long road ahead to economic recovery, and the SBA stands ready to work alongside federal, state, local, and private partners to ensure all of the communities impacted can reimagine and rebuild leveraging the full resources of the SBA.”

“The people of Maui have been through one of the worst disasters in our nation’s history. Their resilience, resolve, and perseverance have been remarkable, and their careful consideration of community throughout the recovery process should act as a model for future operations,” said **FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell**. “FEMA, and the entire Biden-Harris Administration, will continue to work hand-in-hand with the state and local officials of Hawai’i for as long as it takes to ensure the Lahaina community’s recovery from this disaster.”

During a long-term recovery meeting, state, local and federal officials discussed the long-term recovery needs, including long-term housing plans. **Chief Federal Response Coordinator and FEMA Region IX Administrator Bob Fenton** said his goal is to move 1,500 wildfire survivors out of Maui hotels and into more suitable temporary housing. To date, FEMA has secured nearly 1,500 leased properties for survivors, and more than 160 households have moved into temporary housing through FEMA’s Direct Lease program.

“In the long days, weeks, and months that follow a disaster, housing is one of the most pressing needs,” said **HUD Principal Secretary for Community Planning and Development Marion McFadden**. “Whether it’s helping HUD-assisted households, ensuring homeowners have the flexibility they need to rebuild, or providing emergency shelter for those experiencing homelessness through our RUSH grant funding, HUD is committed to working alongside our federal and local partners to support Maui’s recovery.”

“EPA has been honored to take on this kuleana with the trust and support of the community,” **said EPA Region 9 Deputy Administrator Cheree Peterson**. “We will ensure our work is done with the utmost respect and reverence for your home, history, and culture. Mahalo for your support.”



The EPA removed damaged household appliances, lithium batteries, and other hazardous materials from the 5-square-mile area of the Lahaina burn zone. The U.S. Coast Guard raised 96 boats from the harbor, including a commercial submarine.

Crews from USACE are rapidly cleaning residential properties in Lahaina and plan to expand to commercial and public properties by mid-March. After coordinating with owners, cultural experts, and archeologists, workers load the debris from residential properties into plastic-lined trucks for safe transport and temporary storage at the eight-acre temporary debris storage site four miles away in Olowalu.

USACE is also rapidly completing work on a new \$53.7 million school project to serve as the temporary replacement for the King Kamehameha III Elementary School, which was destroyed in the fire. The school, on the north side of Lahaina is nearing completion, only three months after work began. It is to be handed over to educators in late February and classes for 600 students are expected to start April 1.

Administrators Criswell and Guzman visited the Lahaina Disaster Recovery Center, where FEMA and SBA officials work beside state and Maui County disaster officials and voluntary groups to help the town's survivors. This is Criswell's second visit to the recovery center. Last August, she attended a town meeting with President Biden when he visited the island with the first lady.

Administrators Criswell and Guzman also met with nonprofit organizations to discuss their role and their needs in helping the community to thrive again.

Images from today's news conference will be uploaded [here](#).

Video of the news conference can be viewed [here](#).

For the latest information on Maui wildfire recovery efforts, visit mauicounty.gov, mauirecovers.org, fema.gov/disaster/4724 and [Hawaii Wildfires - YouTube](#). Follow FEMA on social media: >[@FEMARegion9](#) and facebook.com/fema. You may also get disaster assistance information and download applications at sba.gov/hawaii-wildfires.



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About the U.S. Small Business Administration

The [U.S. Small Business Administration](https://www.sba.gov) helps power the American dream of business ownership. As the only go-to resource and voice for small businesses backed by the strength of the federal government, the SBA empowers entrepreneurs and small business owners with the resources and support they need to start, grow, or expand their businesses, or recover from a declared disaster. It delivers services through an extensive network of SBA field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations. To learn more, visit www.sba.gov.

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About the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

The [HUD](https://www.hud.gov) mission is to create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all. More information about HUD and its programs is available at www.hud.gov and <https://espanol.hud.gov>. You can also connect with HUD on social media and follow Secretary Fudge on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/SecFudge) and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/SecFudge) or sign up for news alerts on [HUD's Email List](#).

About the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

The mission of [EPA](https://www.epa.gov) is to protect human health and the environment. EPA prepares for, prevents, and responds to oil spills, chemical, biological, radiological releases, and large-scale national emergencies. The agency also provides additional response assistance when state and local first responder capabilities have been exhausted or when additional support is requested.



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About the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

The mission of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is to deliver vital engineering solutions, in collaboration with our partners, to secure our nation, energize our economy, and reduce disaster risk.

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