



President Declares Major Disaster For California Storms

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» [Federal Aid Programs For California Disaster Recovery](#)

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The head of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced today that President Bush has declared a major disaster for California, opening the way for the use of federal funds to help people and communities recover from the effects of a recent period of severe storms.

Acting FEMA Director R. David Paulison said the President took the action following a review of FEMA's analysis of the state's request for federal aid. The declaration covers damage to private and public property from severe storms, flooding, mudslides and landslides that occurred from December 17, 2005 through January 3, 2006.

After the declaration, Paulison designated the counties of Contra Costa, Del Norte, Lake, Marin, Mendocino, Napa, Sacramento, Siskiyou, Solano and Sonoma eligible for federal aid to stricken residents and business owners.

The assistance, to be coordinated by FEMA, can include grants to help pay for temporary housing, home repairs and other serious disaster-related expenses. Low-interest loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration also will be available to cover residential and business losses not fully compensated by insurance.

In addition, Paulison said federal funds will be provided for the state and affected local governments and certain private non-profit organizations to pay 75 percent of the eligible costs for emergency work and the repair or replacement of damaged facilities in the following 29 counties: Alpine, Amador, Butte, Colusa, Contra Costa, Del Norte, El Dorado, Humboldt, Lake, Lassen, Marin, Mendocino, Napa, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Sierra, Siskiyou, Solano, Sonoma, Sutter, Trinity, Yolo and Yuba.

Paulison said the declaration also makes federal funds available to the state on a cost-shared basis for approved projects that reduce future disaster risks. He indicated that additional designations may be made later if requested by the state and warranted by the results of further damage assessments.

Thomas P. Davies of FEMA was named by Paulison to coordinate federal recovery operations. Davies said that those in the counties designated for aid to affected residents and business owners can begin the disaster application process by registering online at www.fema.gov or by calling **1-800-621-FEMA (3362)**, or **1-800-462-7585 (TTY) for the hearing and speech impaired**. The toll-free telephone numbers will be available starting tomorrow from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (local time), seven days a week until further notice.

FEMA prepares the nation for all hazards and manages federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates mitigation activities, trains first responders, works with state and local emergency managers, and manages the National Flood Insurance Program. FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003.