



RYAN BURAS

Deputy Director, Recovery
California Governor's Office of Emergency Services

Prepared Remarks for the Senate Committee on Insurance
Information Hearing on Wildfire Resilience: Innovation in Mitigation

Before the Senate Committee on Insurance

Thursday, March 17, 2022
10:00 A.M., Zoom Meeting

VIRTUAL PRESENTATION



3650 SCHRIEVER AVENUE, MATHER, CA 95655
(916) 845-8506 TELEPHONE (916) 845-8511 FAX
www.CalOES.ca.gov

OPENING COMMENTS

Good morning, Chair Rubio and Vice-Chair Jones and Members of the Senate Committee on Insurance. Thank you for inviting me virtually here today.

This is Ryan Buras, Deputy Director of Recovery for the Governor's Office of Emergency Services'.

As many of you may already be aware, emergencies and environmental disasters move fast. In addition to the continued presence of the COVID-19 virus and its variants, the state of California experienced an unprecedented number of wildfires within the last two years. In 2020 and 2021 alone, wildfires burned millions of acres and damaged over thousands of structures. The destruction caused by these fires affected more than 50 California counties and created an incredibly dangerous living environment for millions of residents and their families. As climate changes intensify California wildfires in the coming years, it's imperative that we begin protecting the homes of the communities in disaster-impacted areas.

STATE PLANNING

The state has a long-term strategy to protect communities from wildfires which focuses on reducing and eliminating potential risks and impacts of natural and human-caused disasters. The California State Hazard Mitigation Plan (SHMP) uses the latest fire science and provides strategies to mitigate the risk in the highest need areas, such as:

- Landscape level interventions such as forest and vegetation management activities;
- Community level defensible space and infrastructure hardening; and
- Homeowner-level interventions such as home hardening and property level defensible space

LOCAL PLANNING

We're also working with communities so that they can conduct and coordinate their own local risk assessments and plans for wildfire mitigation strategies. The local plans are called Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP), and we have staff on site who work with local government leaders to ensure that they develop and update plans so that it also meets the requirements for eligibility to apply for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance grant programs.

HAZARD MITIGATION FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

OES has a few funding opportunities that work to reduce the effects of future natural disasters. Although most of our projects are funding through FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), we are pleased to announce a new one-time, state-funded initiative called "Prepare California" and "Home Hardening" which helps socially vulnerable and high hazard risk communities jumpstart their progress toward great resilience

The following federal HM funding can be allocated strategically to meet mitigation goals:

- **HMGP** – post-disaster grant opportunity that funds 75% of mitigation implementation projects, LHMP creation and updates, and project planning
- **BRIC** – Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities is an annual nationally competitive program (\$1B available in 2021) that funds 75% of large-scale infrastructure and community mitigation, emphasizing the implementation of nature-based solutions for hazard risk reduction and protection of vulnerable communities.
- **Prepare CA Match** – \$85M in state funds to cover the 25% match and \$15M state funds for capacity building activities. These opportunities will offer communities the opportunity to enhance their ability to undertake resiliency projects and planning to participate in HMGP for the highest risk and most socially vulnerable communities
 - HMGP/BRIC/Prepare CA Match funding can specifically protect infrastructure and people - maintain vegetation, create defensible space near towns and structures.
- **CA Wildfire Mitigation Program** – will fund whole-community residential home hardening and defensible space activities for socially vulnerable homeowners. Currently working in 2 demonstration communities before expanding across the state.
- **FMA**- annual national competitive program that protects NFIP insured properties from flooding – this can be used to reduce post fire debris flow risk for repetitive loss properties
- **Home Hardening** – Cal OES is working with three (3) demonstration communities to harden homes in their highest-risk most socially-vulnerable neighborhoods. We are leveraging 75% of the cost from FEMA HMGP

CONCLUSION

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak at this hearing and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.