



News from the Emergency Management Committee Chair (2/12/21)

California Public Utilities Commission Update:

On February 11, 2021, the California Public Utilities Commission issued the following statement via Twitter:

“Today we ordered California wireline telecommunications companies, such as providers of telephone and Internet services, to develop comprehensive resiliency strategies to prepare for catastrophic disasters and power outages, including but not limited to: backup power, redundancy, network hardening, temporary facilities, preparedness planning, and communication and coordination with other utilities, emergency responders, and the public.”

The document containing the full proposed decision is linked here.

FEMA’s Role in COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution

Following [President Biden’s plan for COVID-19 response](#), FEMA will work with other federal agencies to collaborate with state, tribal, and territorial authorities and private sector partners to assist, augment and expedite vaccinations nationwide.

On February 2, [the president directed FEMA to reimburse states for 100% of costs for eligible emergency equipment](#) including masks, gloves, sheltering at risk populations, and other emergency protective measures not funded by HHS/CDC or another federal agency. This directive also told [FEMA to expand the eligible activities for reimbursement for work conducted between January 21, 2021 and September 30, 2021](#). Eligible costs could include supporting the safe opening and operation of eligible schools, child-care facilities, healthcare facilities, non-congregate shelters, domestic violence shelters, transit systems, and other eligible activities after January 21.

FEMA is also supporting vaccination centers by providing expedited financial assistance, federal equipment, and deploying federal personnel to the vaccination sites. The assistance is processed by request. As of February 7, the Disaster Relief Fund has a balance of over \$12.2 billion and has provided \$2.29 billion to 32 states, DC, two tribes and three territories thus far. This money was distributed for expenses relating to COVID-19 vaccination at a 100% federal cost share. The following obligation over \$100 million was made:

- \$20.5 million for Arizona
- **\$823.4 million for California**

- \$8.2 million for Michigan

[This funding is intended for critical supplies, staffing, training, and transportation needs](#) that could help protect and save lives. This funding does not cover costs of purchasing the vaccine and support kits as it will not duplicate any HHS funding. COVID-19 Vaccines and support kits are provided at no cost by the federal government.

New Vaccination Sites in the State

Partnership between the 49ers and Santa Clara County

[The San Francisco 49ers are partnering with the county to open a new mass COVID-19 vaccination site](#) at Levi Stadium in Santa Clara. They opened on Tuesday, February 9th and began by distributing 500 vaccinations. Their goal is to eventually be capable of vaccinating 15,000 people per day.

Governor Newsom explained that the goal is simple, to create a system and get people vaccinated. This new vaccination site at Levi Stadium will now be the largest site in California.

Santa Clara has been most affected by the pandemic of the nine counties in the Bay Area. County officials explained that the location of Levi's Stadium was a vital choice due not only to its size, but also due to the access to public transportation.

ABC News reports that vaccinations are [by appointment only](#) and are currently only available to Santa Clara County residents 65 and older, as well as eligible health care workers.

New Site in the Central Valley

On Wednesday, February 10, 2021, [Governor Newsom visited Fresno](#) to provide an update on California's vaccine distribution efforts and to announce a new mass vaccination site in the Central Valley. This vaccination site is in partnership with the federal government.

Various sources have confirmed to ABC News that Newsom plans to select the Save Mart Center in northeast Fresno to be the location of the site. Local leaders have been requesting an increase in supply of vaccine doses to the Central Valley, so these developments bring hope that even more doses will be allotted to Central California residents.

California uses ZIP Codes, Outreach to Boost Vaccine Equity

County health departments show that people of color in Southern California counties are getting the coronavirus vaccine at rates disproportionately lower than their population so far.

[Targeting vulnerable zip codes](#) is one way San Francisco and other United States cities and counties are trying to ensure they vaccinate people in largely Black, Latino, and working-class communities that have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

Nationwide, states are struggling to equitably distribute vaccines. They're debating what risk factors get someone to the head of the line, those in poverty, communities of color, their job, or underlying conditions or disabilities.

In California, Governor Newsom explained that the locations of the mass vaccination sites, in partnership with the federal government, were chosen to target communities that too often are left behind. He is quoted, "our focus is on equity, in and around that census tract, not just ZIP code." He also said that a new state vaccine distribution system will pay providers to offer shots in vulnerable neighborhoods. According to ABC News, Blue Shield of California, the third-party entity partnered with the state for vaccine distribution, will run this program and collect demographics on who is getting vaccinated.

Recommendations from CDC

CDC Recommends Double or Tight-fitting Masks

The CDC has reported that wearing a tight-fitting or a double mask can significantly decrease exposure and spread of COVID-19. The CDC conducted lab tests with dummies where exposure to potentially infectious aerosols decreased by 90% or more when tight or double masks were worn.

The head of the CDC, Dr. Rochelle Walensky, stated that, "Cases hospitalizations and deaths are still very high, now is not the time to roll back mask requirements."

How the Camp Fire Timeline Could Lead Lifesaving Research and Action

In 2018, the Camp Fire that devastated Paradise and surrounding communities turned out to be the costliest and natural disaster worldwide that year. The fire still holds two records for being both the deadliest and the most destructive wildfire in the state's history, killing 85 residents and destroying over 18,000 buildings.

Researchers [at the National Institute of Standards and Technology \(NIST\)](#) have been investigating the conditions of the area prior to the fire while also reconstructing the sequence of events in the first 24 hours of the fire's progression to try and see what we can learn to prevent a disaster of this magnitude hitting our state again. They have [released a new report](#) that holds the timeline of the event and identifies where further research needs to be conducted to improve safety and further prevent losses of structure.

According to NIST, there is currently no standard method to compare wildfire hazards, so researchers could not compare the whole town of Paradise to other communities in Northern California, but were able to point out individual similarities. The researchers tried to bridge this gap by developing framework in the form of a document and encouraging city officials to record specific information on fuels, population, emergency notifications and other aspects of the community.

If adopted statewide, this framework could expose areas most at risk and worthy of attention and resources. For first responders, the report could prove to be a valuable training material. [The full report is now available with several maps showing the fire spread.](#)

To Counter the Worsening Drought, California Needs Healthy Soil

California is in the early stages of a severe multi-decadal drought, exacerbated by the climate crisis. A strategy to improve the state's water storage capacity involves an ancient technology so ubiquitous that it is often overlooked, soil. [The urgency of California's drought and wildfire risks require that we invest in soil health.](#)

California is an agricultural powerhouse in large part due to its fertile soils. However, historical agricultural practices have depleted their organic carbon content and diminished their water holding capacity. Cal Matters reported several studies revealing that when soil's carbon is restored through regenerative agriculture, it absorbs and retains more water, restores aquifers, draws down and stores more carbon from the atmosphere, sustains biodiversity, yields more and healthier crops, and increases farm profitability.

Hearing: Congressional Committee on Homeland Security on Cyber Threats

On Wednesday, February 10, 2021, the Congressional Committee on Homeland Security held a [virtual hearing](#) assessing cyber threats and building resilience. Chairman Bennie G. Thompson stated that they were there to begin what he hopes will be a bipartisan endeavor, "...making cyberspace more secure and networks more resilient."

Witnesses included: [Mr. Chris Krebs](#), Former Director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security; [Ms. Sue Gordon](#), Former Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence at the Office of the Director of National Intelligence; [Mr. Michael Daniel](#), President & CEO of the Cyber Threat Alliance; and [Mr. Dmitri Alperovitch](#), Executive Chairman of the Silverado Policy Accelerator.

New Funding Opportunities

[Environmental Enhancement & Mitigation](#)

Local, state, and federal agencies and 501(c)(3) nonprofits may apply for and receive grants. The entity is not required to be a transportation or highway related organization but must be able to demonstrate adequate charter or enabling authority to carry out the type of project proposed and be eligible for funding under Article XIX of the State Constitution.

An attempt will be made to allocate 40% of the total funding amount recommended to projects in northern counties and 60% in the southern counties. Southern counties include San Luis Obispo, Kern, Mono, Tulare, Inyo, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Orange, Riverside, San Diego, and Imperial, the rest being considered as northern counties.

All EEM projects must mitigate, either directly or indirectly, the environmental impacts of the modification of an existing Transportation Facility or the environmental impacts of the construction of a new Transportation Facility (hereafter referred to as Related Transportation Facility, RTF). Eligible EEM projects must fit one of the following: Urban Forestry projects, Resource Lands projects, or Mitigation Projects Beyond the Scope of the Lead Agency projects.

This funding is granted by the CA Natural Resources Agency. Total funding available is \$6.7m and [the application](#) deadline is March 5, 2021.

[GFO-20-308-Research and Development of High-Value Recycling Pathways for Lithium-Ion Batteries](#)

The purpose of this solicitation is to fund applied research and development projects that advance the technology readiness, commercial scale-up pathways, and environmental benefits of high-value recycling processes for lithium-ion batteries.

This solicitation is open to all public and private entities with the exception of local publicly owned electric utilities. California Public Resources Code Section 25711.5(a) requires EPIC-funded projects to: benefit electricity ratepayers, and lead to technological advancement and breakthroughs to overcome the barriers that prevent the achievement of the state's statutory energy goals.

This funding is granted by the CA Energy Commission and [the application](#) deadline is March 15, 2021. Total funding is estimated at \$2m.

[404 Hazard Mitigation Grant Program](#)

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds plans and projects that reduce the effects of future natural disasters. In California, these funds are administered by the Cal OES HMGP Unit. Eligible subapplicants include state agencies, local governments, special districts, and some private non-profit.

Mitigation is the effort to reduce loss of life and property by lessening the impact of disasters. Mitigation is taking action now, before the next disaster, to reduce human and financial consequences later. Effective mitigation requires that we all understand local risks, address the hard choices and invest in long-term community well-being and resilience. As a result of a Presidential Disaster Declaration, FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds plans and projects that reduce the effects of future natural disasters.

IMPORTANT DATES:

PF-5293	NOIs were due to Cal OES	10/5/2020
DR-4558	NOIs were due to Cal OES	11/20/2020
DR-4569	NOIs were due to Cal OES	12/30/2020
PF-5293	Subapplications were due to OES	1/27/2021
DR-4558	Subapplications due to OES	3/5/2021
DR-4569	Subapplications due to OES	5/1/2021

NOIs submitted after these dates may be considered for other funding opportunities. NOIs will be reviewed for eligibility and eligible submissions will be invited to submit full grant subapplications. The NOI is intended to provide an opportunity for eligible subapplicants to propose well-defined mitigation actions that reduce risk to life and property from future natural hazards. Eligible subapplications that are not initially selected for submission to FEMA will be retained for future consideration when funding becomes available.

The funding is being granted by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services and the official application deadline is May 1, 2021. Total funding is estimated at \$500k.

COVID-19 Emergency HELP Loan Program

This program will provide low cost loans with more flexible terms for health facilities in the state of California that have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

General requirements include:

- Annual gross revenues cannot exceed \$30 million as shown on the most recent audited financial statement (no revenue limit for qualifying rural health facilities and district hospitals).
- Must be a health facility as defined in the Authority's Act (Section 15432(d) of the California Government Code).
- Must be a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation or a public health facility (e.g., District hospital) as defined in the Authority's Act (Section 15432(e) of the California Government Code).
- Must have been in existence for at least three years, providing the same types of services.
- Must provide evidence acceptable to the Authority that that the health facility has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and that loan proceeds will be used to address the impact.
- Must demonstrate evidence of fiscal soundness and the ability to meet the terms of the proposed loan.
- For construction, remodeling, renovation, and improvement projects, must show readiness to begin projects within 30 days after approval.

Funds may be used for:

- Construction, remodeling, renovation, and/or improvements;
- Equipment and/or furnishings;
- Day-to-day operational expenses (working capital);
- Reimbursement of prior expenditures related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Funds may NOT be used for:

- Funding start-up projects;
- Refinancing outstanding loans.

Loan Terms:

- 0% fixed interest rate
- \$250,000 loan maximum
- Maximum loan maturities vary

Fees:

- No application fee;
- Closing fee: 1% of the loan amount, which could be deducted from the loan proceeds

The California State Treasurer's Office will be granting the loan. [The application](#) deadline is ongoing and total estimated funding available is \$5m.