



COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

Executive Office

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 23, 2024

TO: HONORABLE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

FROM: EXECUTIVE OFFICE

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES (DWR) FLOOD EMERGENCY RESPONSE GRANT PROGRAM - MENDOCINO COUNTY 2024 FLOOD EMERGENCY RESPONSE INITIATIVE

Program Background

In January 2005, the State recognized the urgent need for improved flood system maintenance, system rehabilitation, effective emergency response, and sustainable funding. In a white paper entitled Flood Warnings: Responding to California's Flood Crisis, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) outlined major flood issues facing California and offered specific recommendations for administrative action and legislative changes. The funding through Propositions 1E and 84 in November 2006 demonstrated the public's willingness to invest in integrated flood management solutions.

Currently, most of the State's funds available for the program are provided by Propositions 1E and 84. The California legislature allocated proposition funds for specific purposes and regions, placing a high priority on improving flood protection and preparedness in the Central Valley and Delta.

DWR has initiated a robust flood emergency response program to reduce the consequences of flooding when it occurs. The components of the flood emergency response program include working with local emergency response agencies to improve planning, preparedness, and response to flood emergencies.

The purpose of the DWR Flood Emergency Response Grant Program is to provide funding for local emergency responders to work with DWR to improve local flood emergency preparedness and response. DWR recognizes that a coordinated flood emergency response throughout the state requires active engagement of the local emergency responders. As a result, the grant program promotes coordination of flood emergency response using the SEMS/NIMS structure as well as improved communication and working relationships between special districts, local governments, and their respective counties. Under this grant program, DWR provides financial assistance through grant agreements with participating agencies to ensure local agencies have a

robust flood emergency plan in place with adequate flood preparedness and response capacity and resources.

Mendocino County 2024 Flood Emergency Response Grant Proposal

Mendocino County is an at-risk region that requires additional resources to effectively address and support county-wide efforts around flood planning, resiliency, and response effectively. With only four incorporated cities, the County's 3,800 square miles are primarily rural, and the majority of its ~91,000 residents live in or near the wildland-urban interface—interspersed between various population pools and pockets. The population density is about 26.1 per square mile (2020), and the median household income is \$56,378 (2017-2021), with a poverty level of ~16.1%. Mendocino County's median income is less than 80% of statewide and national averages. 64.84% of Mendocino County's population is disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged, accounting for nearly 60,000 people. Fourteen census tracts are flagged as poor.

Climate change has exacerbated hazards faced in this area in recent years, which include wildfire, drought, extreme heat events, severe winter storms, and associated flooding, poor air quality due to wildfires, agriculture and forestry pests and diseases, dune and bluff erosion, landslides and debris flows, and sea-level rise. Per FEMA's National Risk Index, Mendocino County is in the 95.1 national percentile, has a "very high" social vulnerability, and the highest hazard type risk ratings are wildfire (97.3), drought (99.4), earthquake (98.4), landslide (99.5), and riverine flooding (96.0). In recent years, climate change-related hazards continued to be experienced throughout the County—from the 2017 firestorm through the severe winter storms of 2023.

Severe weather events impacting Mendocino County are high wind, heavy rain, extreme heat, and fog. Between 2000 and 2019, the County experienced \$34 million in property damage caused by heavy rain and high wind. The average annual rainfall in the northeastern County can reach as much as 80+ inches. Severe weather can lead to localized flooding and generate high winds that increase threats to public safety.

If DWR funds the listed projects below, they would enable improved planning and County response capabilities during climate hazards that could impact infrastructure, including possible dam failure or landslides caused by excessive rainfall, flooding, and severe storms. The proposed projects would also address the loss of communications capability during any of the listed climate hazard events, allowing the County to more effectively utilize a vital emergency communications method that has proven exceedingly valuable during previous emergency events.

2024 FLOOD EMERGENCY RESPONSE GRANT PROPOSAL - \$289,387

- **Planning, Coordination & Communication (\$195,700)**
 - Prepare a local flood emergency plan
 - Develop and install maps and decision support tools for the Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
 - Emergency communications equipment for the Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
- **Facilities, Equipment & Supplies (\$80,000)**
 - To purchase and equip four flood fight containers to be placed strategically throughout the county
- **Administration (\$13,687)**
 - DWR program allows 5% for program administration