

# News Release



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January 26, 2011

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

*Denise L. Benson, Division Manager  
San Bernardino County Fire Department  
Office of Emergency Services*

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) today announced that federal disaster aid has been made available to California to supplement state and local recovery efforts in the areas affected by the December 2010 and January 2011 Winter Storms.

Under FEMA's Public Assistance (PA) Program, funding is provided to the state, eligible local governments, and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis. The declaration of a federal emergency means that FEMA will cover 75 percent of the eligible costs; CalEMA will cover 18.75 percent of the eligible costs; the local government agency is responsible for the remaining 6.25 percent. The decision on Individual Assistance (IA) support for private property owners is still pending.

"This declaration is due to the cooperation between agencies, and the funding associated with it is critical to get our roads and infrastructure back into shape," said San Bernardino County 3rd District Supervisor Neil Derry.

The San Bernardino County Fire Department Office of Emergency Services (OES) is continuing to conduct the cost recovery phase of the December 2010 Winter Storm incident and is in the process of facilitating activities such as the Applicant's Briefing, and After Action Conferences.

"We welcome the news that President Obama has declared a major disaster due to the Winter Storms that had such a disastrous effect on many of our communities," said Denise Benson, Division Manager of the San Bernardino County Office of Emergency Services. "We hope that the federal government will also find the need to provide Individual Assistance support for private property owners, which would greatly help our citizens affected by these disasters."

Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) teams consisting of representatives from CalEMA, FEMA and the Small Business Administration (SBA) toured various damaged sites in the County during the first week in January. City and County representatives met with the teams to show them the significant public and private property damage so they may determine the estimated amount of damage. The countywide storm damage total now exceeds \$97.3 million. Of that, \$77,835,291 is PA and \$19,554,000 is IA.

On December 21, 2010, San Bernardino County Chairman Gary Ovitt proclaimed a local emergency, followed shortly after by Governor Schwarzenegger, who proclaimed a state of emergency in San Bernardino County. On December 29, 2010, Acting Governor Abel Maldonado sent a letter to President Obama requesting the declaration of a major disaster. And, on January 11, 2011, Governor Jerry Brown submitted an amended request for a Major Disaster Declaration and federal assistance to President Obama on behalf of 12 California counties including San Bernardino County. Jurisdictions proclaim a local emergency when circumstances of a disaster are, or are likely to be, beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment and facilities of any single county, city and require the combined forces of mutual aid regions to combat.



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**Dan Wurl  
Fire Chief**