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State of California

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California Awarded \$70 Million in Federal Disaster Resilience Funding

Money will fund recovery and resilience from the 2013 Rim Fire in Tuolumne County

SACRAMENTO – California will receive more than \$70 million in federal funding for an innovative disaster recovery and resilience program in Tuolumne County following the devastating 2013 Rim Fire. The funding, part of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's [National Disaster Resilience Competition](#), will be used to help restore forest and watershed health, support local economic development and increase disaster resilience in the rural mountain areas affected by the fire.

"In California, we've experienced firsthand the impacts of extreme weather and a changing climate," said California Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. "These funds will help us recover from the devastating Rim Fire and continue to prepare for an uncertain future."

The Rim Fire, which burned more than 257,000 acres, was the third largest fire in state history. "Large wildfires have claimed nearly 400,000 acres and hundreds of homes and structures across California since 2013," said HUD Regional Administrator Ophelia Basgal. "With this award, HUD supports a timely and replicable state-led resiliency initiative to combat what may become a growing trend of more frequent and severe wildfires fueled by the effects of climate change."

In competing for the federal dollars, partners from federal, state, and local agencies collaborated with residents of Tuolumne County to develop the [Community Watershed and Resilience Program](#). This model program will provide funding for restoration and reforestation of the burn area, development of a bioenergy and wood products facility, job training and development of a Community Resilience Center.

The program is designed to be replicated in other forested areas of the Western United States to embed resilience and reduce the risk of wildfire. "This grant isn't just a win for Tuolumne County and the thousands of annual visitors to the Stanislaus National Forest. It's a win for all communities located adjacent to national forests," said U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Regional Forester Randy Moore.

Key elements of the program include implementation in rural communities and partnerships among state agencies, the U.S. Forest Service and residents of Tuolumne County. "This is very exciting news given the challenges still before us and the tremendous effort put into our application by the project team," said Tuolumne County Supervisor Randy Hanvelt, "We hope to work with our federal, state and local partners to use the award as a building block towards becoming an example of healthy forest practices and community resilience."



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The [National Disaster Resilience Competition](#) provides \$1 billion in funding to states and communities to rebuild housing and infrastructure in a more resilient way following a major disaster. States that had a Presidential disaster declaration between 2011 and 2013 were eligible. California was among 40 finalists in the competition, and was one of 13 states to receive an award.

California's forests are critical to the preservation of the state's water supply and an important economic resource for rural communities. The state's Community Watershed and Resilience Program includes the following components:

Forest and Watershed Health

The main activities include biomass removal, reforestation and restoration, and the creation of a network of strategic fire breaks. Removal of biomass from public lands, tree planting, noxious weed removal and rangeland restoration will be the primary focus. The creation of seven critical fire breaks identified by CAL FIRE and the U.S. Forest Service will also improve regional protection and enhance the recovery of ecosystems and communities.

Biomass Facility and Wood Products

This facility will provide clean power to residents of Tuolumne County. It will include a sustainable wood products business generating fence posts, pellets and some timber. Residual wood products will then be used in a modern biomass facility to generate heat, electricity and cooling.

Community Resilience Center

The creation of a community resilience center will serve multiple purposes and provide year-round services such as a food bank, education and training facilities, commercial kitchens and child care. During emergencies, it will serve as an evacuation center that includes animal boarding, cooking facilities, internet connectivity and other needed services.

State agencies partnering to develop the program include the [Department of Housing and Community Development](#), the [Governor's Office of Planning and Research](#), the [Department of Forestry and Fire Protection](#), the [California Environmental Protection Agency](#) and the [Governor's Office of Emergency Services](#). Other partners included the [U.S. Forest Service](#) and the [Sierra Nevada Conservancy](#).

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