



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Biomass Utilization Fund has \$17 million to finance Tuolumne County businesses

West Sacramento, Calif. — The Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC), and Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) are pleased to announce a new \$17 million program that will provide loans to increase the use of low- and no-value wood from Tuolumne County forests and provide an alternative to pile burning of forest waste. The loans are available to small businesses, nonprofits and public entities including federally recognized Tribes that are located in or locating to Tuolumne County. Applicants are required to provide new, permanent job opportunities, predominantly for low- and moderate-income individuals.

HCD received an award from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development under the Community Development Block Grant – National Disaster Resilience funding to demonstrate how expanding biomass-based businesses could make Tuolumne County more resilient as it continues to rebuild from the devastation of the 2013 Rim Fire. HCD partnered with SNC to lead the effort to establish a new Biomass Utilization Fund to encourage the use of forest biomass and increase community and forest resilience.

“This funding for loans will go far to meet the state’s goal of creating resilience in the county and can serve as a model that can be replicated in other parts of the state,” said Jennifer Seeger, HCD’s Acting Deputy Director for HCD’s Division of Financial Assistance.

HCD and SNC have entered into an agreement with RCAC to manage the Biomass Utilization Fund. Applications are being accepted now, and all applications received by **June 12, 2020** will be given the same consideration. Applications received after June 12 will be evaluated based on the availability of funds. Recipients of Biomass Utilization Fund loans must document job creation and expend all funds by **April 30, 2022**.

“We’re thrilled to be working with RCAC on this program to boost the restoration economy in Tuolumne County,” said SNC Executive Officer Angela Avery. “SNC is hearing from communities across the Sierra Nevada that the timing couldn’t be better to invest in job creation and forest resilience.”

“RCAC is honored and enthused to manage the loan making process for this important endeavor to further Tuolumne County’s resilience and rebuilding effort. We have a number of business loan products that we believe will complement Biomass Utilization Fund resources and further the goal of creating jobs for county residents,” said RCAC Chief Executive Officer Suzanne Anarde.

More information about the loans and application materials are available at www.rcac.org/BUF.

RCAC and SNC will host a webinar for interested parties to learn more on May 12. [Click on this link to](#) register, or contact RCAC Events staff at (916) 447-9832 ext. 1429, or email registration@rcac.org.

RCAC is an equal opportunity lender.

About the Department of Housing and Community Development

The California Department of Housing and Community Development promotes safe, affordable homes and vibrant communities throughout California by increasing the supply of affordable places to live, preserving affordable homes, and ensuring California plans for a range of housing that meets the varied needs of Californians.

About Rural Community Assistance Corporation

Founded in 1978, RCAC provides training, technical and financial resources and advocacy so rural communities can achieve their goals and visions. RCAC serves rural communities in 13 western states and western Pacific islands. Services are available to communities with populations of fewer than 50,000, other nonprofit groups, Tribal organizations, farmworkers, colonias and other specific populations. RCAC staff provides direct services in collaboration with local and community partnerships in three program areas: affordable housing, environmental services and lending. RCAC provides loans, including small business loans, technical and economic development assistance to rural communities and nonprofit organizations in its service region. To find out more about RCAC's Loan Fund products, visit <http://www.rcac.org/programs-services/>.

About the Sierra Nevada Conservancy

SNC is a California state agency that initiates, encourages, and supports efforts that improve the environmental, economic, and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada Region, its communities, and the citizens of California. To learn more about SNC, visit <http://www.sierranevada.ca.gov>.

HCD media contact:

Karen Naungayan, Assistant Director
External Affairs
(916) 207-9132
Karen.Naungayan@hcd.ca.gov

SNC media contact:

Isaac Silverman
Communications Manager
(530) 823-4711
Isaac.Silverman@sierranevada.ca.gov

RCAC media contact:

Julia Helmreich, Director
Communications, Development &
Events
(916) 447-9832 ext. 1008
jhelmreich@rcac.org