



# Disaster News

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## **\$6.4 Million Obligated for Debris Basin Cleanup in San Bernardino County**

**PASADENA, Calif.** — The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) today announced \$6.4 million as reimbursement under the Public Assistance program to the County of San Bernardino for eligible costs incurred in cleaning debris basins following the storms of December 27 – January 11, 2005.

“In their commitment to keeping communities safe from mud flows, floods and landslides, San Bernardino County has done an extraordinary job in building and maintaining the debris basins,” said Federal Coordinating Officer David Fukutomi. “That is why we have expedited reimbursement funds to the County for work that prevents property damage and loss of life.”

Debris basins intercept large amounts of debris moving from areas upslope to protect residences, businesses and infrastructure downstream. The basins also remove debris that could rapidly fill downstream flood control facilities and reduce their effectiveness.

At the request of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, San Bernardino County was one of seven Southern California counties, including Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, Santa Barbara, San Diego and Ventura, that became eligible for public assistance funding under the President's federal disaster declaration on February 4, 2005. Under the program, FEMA provides 75 percent (\$4.8 million) of the project's cost, with the remaining 25 percent coming from the State of California and the County of San Bernardino.

“The storms of December 27 through January 11 placed a significant burden on debris basins and other facilities, as well as the budgets of local governments,” said Henry Renteria, state coordinating officer and director of OES. “The release of these and future reimbursement payments by FEMA and OES will help relieve some of that burden.”

Chairman of the Board of Supervisors Bill Postmus added, “The communities of San Bernardino County have greatly benefited from the professional coordination by both FEMA and State OES and we appreciate the expediency of this funding award.”

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The Public Assistance program funds essential government costs. The categories of expenses eligible for assistance can include debris removal; immediate protective measures, including overtime pay for emergency workers; repair of roads and bridges; repair of water control facilities; repair of public buildings and equipment; repair of public utilities; and repair of recreational facilities such as parks.

OES coordinates overall state agency response to major disasters in support of local government. The office is responsible for ensuring California's readiness to respond to and recover from natural, manmade and war-caused emergencies and for assisting local governments in their emergency preparedness, response, mitigation and recovery efforts.

FEMA prepares the nation for all hazards and manages federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates mitigation activities, trains first responders, works with state and local emergency managers, and manages the National Flood Insurance Program and the U.S. Fire Administration. FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003.

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*Disaster recovery assistance is available to any individual without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, economic status, or disability.*