



WELCOME
Santa Cruz County
Small Water Systems Forum
September 18, 2024



- ▶ Documentation for Disasters
- ▶ Hexavalent Chromium MCL
- ▶ Lead and Copper Service Line Inventory Guidance




Disaster Declarations Are Becoming Increasingly Common

- ▶ In the last 100 years, Santa Cruz County has experienced 32 declared disasters
- ▶ The most common disaster declarations have been for **wildfires, severe storms, and flooding**
- ▶ Of those 32 disasters, 10 have occurred in the last 10 years.
- ▶ The increasing number of disaster declarations is driven by several factors, including changes in hazard frequency and increased development in high-risk areas.

WHEN IS A DISASTER DECLARED?

1) In response to a possible disaster, Federal, State, and Local governments complete a Preliminary Damage Assessment to determine the extent of the damage and what assistance may be needed.



2) State government determines if the damage exceeds their available resources. If so, the Governor submits a declaration request to the President.



3) The President can then make a major disaster declaration, which provides a wide range of federal assistance programs for individuals and public infrastructure, including funds for both emergency and permanent work.

Once A Disaster Is Declared, FEMA Assistance Becomes Available

- ▶ FEMA's Public Assistance Program provides supplemental grants to public utilities and certain types of private non-profits
- ▶ These grants are intended to help cover the costs of restoring public infrastructure, including water control facilities
- ▶ The federal share of assistance is at least 75%

As a public utility, you should be eligible to receive this grant assistance.

The FEMA Application Process is Challenging

- ▶ The nature of disasters, combined with the multiple possible government agencies involved, can create a challenging process for application
- ▶ To provide a firsthand account of navigating this, Nicole Launder from Bracken Brae Country Club is here to explain how they managed the FEMA process after the CZU Fire in 2020.



Key Take Aways for FEMA Application

Know	Know that, as a public utility, you are eligible for FEMA public grants.
Proof	Be ready to request a FEMA grant by gathering proof that your system is a public utility. This can be a State tax form and county permit or Federal Tax form showing your system is a non-profit (501(c)).
Document	Document all the components your water system is comprised of. This can take the form of schematics, photos, and county permits.
Back-up	Back-up all the documents above to avoid them being lost in the disaster. The County should also have these documents, which can be provided whenever requested.

Get ahead on coming requirements

- ▶ [Senate Bill 1188](#) was passed by the State Legislature and has been sent to the Governor for signature.
- ▶ This bill establishes minimum standards for Technical, Managerial, and Financial (TMF) capacity for small water systems serving under 10,000 connections, including:
 - ▶ Infrastructure adequacy
 - ▶ Governance structure
 - ▶ Revenue adequacy
- ▶ These standards will be created by the State Board and systems will be required to show compliance no sooner than 2 years after the standards being adopted.
- ▶ This bill was authored by Senator John Laird in response to the failure of Big Basin Water Company following the CZU fire.

[Senator Laird Introduces Legislation to Promote Safe Drinking Water | Senator John Laird \(ca.gov\)](#)

Thank You!

If anyone has question about the process to become a 501(c) 3, the Community Foundation has staff in attendance that can describe their process.

IRS Guide on the types of organizations that qualify as Non-profits: <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p557.pdf>