



News Release

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Santa Clara County Residents Eligible for FEMA Aid for SCU Fire Damage Recovery

Supervisor Cortese's Urgent Request to Governor Results in Disaster Declaration for County

Santa Clara County today joined eight other counties in California included in a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration, opening the door to federal aid for cattle ranchers and residents who have lost an estimated \$26 million in the SCU Fire.

The County received confirmation in a letter received today. On September 2, Supervisor Dave Cortese sent an urgent request to Governor Gavin Newsom that Santa Clara County also be on the list of those counties that have been eligible for FEMA aid since August 22. Today, the County received notice that its residents will also have access to federal aid. The first step in applying for FEMA aid is to register at fema.gov/disaster/4558.

"I am relieved that Santa Clara County residents will have access to federal funding to help them recover from this disaster," said Supervisor Cortese.

“Although the SCU Fire area was not as populated as other fire areas, the damage is devastating to cattle ranchers who have lost grazing land, their homes and livelihoods.”

A Presidential Major Disaster Declaration helps people in the impacted counties through eligibility for support, including individual financial support and reimbursements, crisis counseling, housing and unemployment assistance and legal services. It also provides federal assistance to help state, tribal and local governments fund emergency response, recovery and protective measures. FEMA can also provide psychological counseling and resources to thousands of residents who were impacted by evacuation orders.

On August 22, the state announced that the White House had approved California’s request for a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration to support residents in Lake, Napa, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Solano, Sonoma and Yolo counties. Monterey County was added to the list two days later.

Supervisor Cortese has toured SCU Fire areas in the Diablo Range of the County from San Jose to beyond Lick Observatory to the San Antonio Valley to survey the widespread damage. Black scorched earth has replaced vibrant grasslands, shrubs and oak trees that provided feed and shelter to 13,471 head of cattle and livelihoods to the ranchers who raised them.

The SCU Fire consumed 396,524 acres in Santa Clara, Contra Costa, Alameda, San Joaquin, Merced and Stanislaus Counties, and is 98% contained.

Initial damage estimates of the impacted areas of the SCU Fire is \$26 million, including the loss of cattle and the loss of vegetation on grazing lands, according to a report from the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources. This estimate does not include the loss of roads, cabins, barns and other buildings. The report also notes that water quality and quantity will suffer from the fire’s impact on the Calaveras and San Antonio Reservoirs in Santa Clara and Alameda Counties. Visit my website, supervisorcortese.org, for the entire report and to view a map showing damage to structures.

The fire also damaged acres of County Parks and land near the Lick Observatory on Mt. Hamilton, and displaced local workers such as heavy equipment operators, destroyed water tanks, private and public power lines and utilities and communications systems.

For more information and to arrange a tour of the damaged areas, contact the Office of Supervisor Dave Cortese at 408-299-5030.