

Montana - Wildfire FEMA-4074-DR

Declared August 2, 2012

On July 25, 2012, Governor Brian Schweitzer requested a major disaster declaration due to a wildfire during the period of June 25 to July 10, 2012. The Governor requested a declaration for Public Assistance for two counties and one Indian Tribe, and Hazard Mitigation statewide. During the period of July 16-20, 2012, joint federal, Tribal, and local government Preliminary Damage Assessments (PDAs) were conducted in the requested counties and are summarized below. PDAs estimate damages immediately after an event and are considered, along with several other factors, in determining whether a disaster is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the state, Tribe, and the affected local governments, and that Federal assistance is necessary.¹

On August 2, 2012, President Obama declared that a major disaster exists in the State of Montana. This declaration made Public Assistance requested by the Governor available to state, Tribal and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities damaged by the wildfire in Powder River and Rosebud Counties and the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation. This declaration also made Hazard Mitigation Grant Program assistance requested by the Governor available for hazard mitigation measures for all counties and Indian Tribes in the State of Montana.²

Summary of Damage Assessment Information Used in Determining Whether to Declare a Major Disaster

Individual Assistance - (*Not requested*)

- Total Number of Residences Impacted:³ -
 - Destroyed - -
 - Major Damage - -
 - Minor Damage - -
 - Affected - -

- Percentage of insured residences:⁴ -
- Percentage of low income households:⁵ -
- Percentage of elderly households:⁶ -
- Total Individual Assistance cost estimate: N/A

Public Assistance

- Primary Impact: Damage to utilities
- Total Public Assistance cost estimate: \$1,602,905
- Statewide per capita impact:⁷ \$1.62
- Statewide per capita impact indicator:⁸ \$1.35
- Countywide per capita impact: Powder River County (\$324.62), Rosebud County (\$110.17), and the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation (\$4.16)
- Countywide per capita impact indicator:⁹ \$3.39

¹ The Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) process is a mechanism used to determine the impact and magnitude of damage and resulting needs of individuals, businesses, public sector, and community as a whole. Information collected is used by the State as a basis for the Governor's request for a major disaster or emergency declaration, and by the President in determining a response to the Governor's request (44 CFR § 206.33).

² When a Governor's request for major disaster assistance under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended (Stafford Act) is under review, a number of primary factors are considered to determine whether assistance is warranted. These factors are outlined in FEMA's regulations (44 CFR § 206.48). The President has ultimate discretion and decision making authority to declare major disasters and emergencies under the Stafford Act (42 U.S.C. § 5170 and § 5191).

³ Degree of damage to impacted residences:

- Destroyed – total loss of structure, structure is not economically feasible to repair, or complete failure to major structural components (e.g., collapse of basement walls/foundation, walls or roof);
- Major Damage – substantial failure to structural elements of residence (e.g., walls, floors, foundation), or damage that will take more than 30 days to repair;
- Minor Damage – home is damaged and uninhabitable, but may be made habitable in short period of time with repairs; and
- Affected – some damage to the structure and contents, but still habitable.

⁴ By law, Federal disaster assistance cannot duplicate insurance coverage (44 CFR § 206.48(b)(5)).

⁵ Special populations, such as low-income, the elderly, or the unemployed may indicate a greater need for assistance (44 CFR § 206.48(b)(3)).

⁶ Ibid (44 CFR § 206.48(b)(3)).

⁷ Based on State population in the 2010 Census.

⁸ Statewide Per Capita Impact Indicator for FY12, *Federal Register*, October 1, 2011.

⁹ Countywide Per Capita Impact Indicator for FY12, *Federal Register*, October 1, 2011.