

HB

421



NEWS RELEASE
 FEDERAL/STATE/LOCAL
 COORDINATING OFFICE
 Fax NewsExpress

150 East Colorado Boulevard

Pasadena, CA 91101

O E S
 CALIFORNIA

FEMA-DR-1008-CA-PR#145

February 4, 1994

*

California Office of
 Emergency Services

Media Contacts:

FEMA: (818) 405-7548

OES: (818) 405 7408

FEMA EARTHQUAKE HOUSING AID
 FLOWING TO HARDEST HIT AREAS

PASADENA --- The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) says a steady stream of checks is headed to southern California homeowners to repair their quake-damaged homes or find alternate housing.

FEMA says it is prioritizing delivery of checks to people who live in areas which experienced the greatest ground motion during the Northridge quake, and which city housing inspections suggest contain high concentrations of heavily damaged structures.

As of Wednesday, (Feb. 2), over \$76.8 million in temporary housing checks had been distributed to over 25,000 families.

Federal Coordinating Officer Frank Kishton, of FEMA, says some people receiving housing checks mistakenly believe that they are not eligible for housing assistance because they're still able to live in their homes.

"In many cases the housing checks which applicants receive can be used to repair quake damage, including damage to chimneys, windows, doors and walls, even though the applicants weren't forced to move out of the home," Kishton said.

Kishton says some applicants are surprised that FEMA has designed a telephone application process that is simple, non-bureaucratic, and relatively quick. A single phone application covers a wide range of disaster aid, including temporary housing, disaster loans, crisis counseling, and individual and family grants. So some people are unaware that telling FEMA their house sustained damage triggers an automatic review of their eligibility for temporary housing assistance, including home repairs.

If an applicant ultimately qualifies for other FEMA assistance, but not temporary housing or home repairs, the amount of the housing check can be subtracted from other federal assistance for which the person qualifies.

--more--

EARTHQUAKE HOUSING AID
Add One

With the need for housing assistance so great in some parts of the southland, FEMA has expedited check delivery to applicants who pass the initial review of eligibility. FEMA inspectors will conduct follow-up examinations at the residences of all applicants to verify structural and personal property damage.

FEMA says its systematic distribution of temporary housing and home repair checks has gone only to disaster assistance applicants who have indicated their homes sustained earthquake damage.

Enclosed with each of these checks is a notice which states:

"Because your application indicates that your home was damaged or destroyed by the earthquake you are being provided FEMA assistance. By cashing the enclosed check you are confirming that the information on your application is true and correct and are agreeing to use these funds only to meet your disaster-related emergency housing needs, rent for alternative housing, or repairs to your home. You will soon receive a letter from FEMA with more specific information concerning this assistance. If you have any questions, please call FEMA's Disaster Information Hotline at 1-800-525-0321 or 1-800-660-8005 TDD."

In addition, under separate cover a copy of the completed application is provided to the family, along with a description of all FEMA and related disaster assistance which may be available. The application is verified to certify the accuracy of the information contained in the application.

Should disaster assistance applicants wish to return FEMA checks, they may do so by mailing the checks to:

FEMA
Disaster Temporary Housing Program
P.O. Box 8020
Redwood City CA 94063

If applicants have questions about any aspect of the disaster assistance program, including eligibility issues, they are urged to call the Disaster Information Helpline at 1-800-525-0321 or 1-800-660-8005, the TDD number for the speech or hearing-impaired.

###

Sponsor Statement HB 421

OVERVIEW

This legislation was introduced at the request of the State of Alaska's Division of Emergency Services. Under current state statute, people that are displaced from their homes during a state declared disaster must have temporary housing arrangements negotiated individually by DMVA. This can be a lengthy, tedious process that takes precious resources away from other disaster assistance. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has streamlined this process during a federally declared disaster by making grants directly to displaced individuals. These individuals then make their own housing arrangements, reducing costs and removing possible liability from the government as a lessor.

WHAT HB 421 DOES

HB 421 adds language to AS 26.23.100 that would allow the Division of Emergency Services the ability to grant funds to displaced people for temporary housing during state declared disasters. Eligibility for these funds would be determined by the criteria set out by DES. This change will result in more efficient response to temporary housing needs during a state declared disaster.

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS
BRIEFING PAPER HB421

Background:

Whenever people are displaced from their homes because of a disaster, part of the disaster assistance provided by the Division of Emergency Services (DES) is the provision of temporary housing. The authority for doing this is addressed in A.S. 26.23.100. The current authority is limited to the state making direct payments for providing temporary housing. The statutes also allow the state to work through local governments to provide temporary housing.

Current statutes do not authorize DMVA to make housing assistance grants to persons displaced from their homes during state-declared disasters. Without this authority, DMVA must negotiate lease/rental terms for every individual or family requiring temporary housing during a disaster. This task is administratively burdensome and increases the administrative costs of a disaster by requiring time to monitor and manage the lease agreements. However, the process for providing temporary housing in a federally-declared disaster is significantly more efficient.

In a federally-declared disaster, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) staff directly administers the temporary housing program, using 100% federal funds. The federal temporary housing program makes grants directly to individuals for them to arrange their own temporary housing. Granting funds to recipients to arrange their own housing reduces administrative costs, removes liability from the government as a lessor, and reduces government involvement in personal issues.

Impact of proposed legislation:

HB421 will specifically permit DMVA to grant funds to eligible disaster victims who have located temporary housing. The eligibility of disaster victims would be determined by the staff of the Division of Emergency Services (DES) using criteria established in the Temporary Housing Assistance Plan promulgated by DES. This granting authority will greatly expedite the ability of DMVA to respond to providing for temporary housing during a disaster, and would allow each family or individual affected to secure housing which best fits their housing needs.

The addition of this granting authority will add another tool in the ability of DES to respond to temporary housing needs. It will not be the only way these needs are met, and circumstances of a particular event will influence the choice of approaches to temporary housing.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
1994 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. HB 421

Revision Date: _____ Dept. Affected: Military and Veterans Affairs
 Title: Authorizing grants for temporary housing assistance BRU: na
during emergencies and disasters Component: _____
 Sponsor: House MVA
 Requestor: House MVA COMPONENT SERIAL NO. _____

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 95	FY 96	FY 97	FY 98	FY 99	FY 00
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0					

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
----------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1008 GF/MHTIA						
Other						
TOTAL	0.0					

Estimate of any current year (FY94) cost: \$ (not applicable)

POSITIONS

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)
 Zero fiscal impact

Prepared by: Jeff Morrison, Director Phone: 465-4730
 Division: Administrative Support Services Division Date: February 7, 1994
 Approved by Commissioner: *Jeff Morrison for* Hugh L. Cox III Date: February 7, 1994
 Agency: Military and Veterans Affairs

PREPARER TO PROVIDE ALL DISTRIBUTION COPIES TO GOVERNOR'S LEGISLATIVE OFFICE
 For further distribution information, call the Governor's Legislative Office