



# COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 2/10/2026

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**File #:** 26-119

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**To:** Board of Supervisors

**From:** Supervisor Rex Bohn

**Agenda Section:** Initiated by Board Member

**Vote Requirement:** Majority

**SUBJECT:**

Consider a Zero-Interest Loan Program to Assist Homeowners in King Salmon Affected by the January Flooding Event

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Find that the establishment of a zero-interest loan program to assist homeowners in King Salmon impacted by recent flooding will serve a public purpose by supporting affected residents while maintaining prudent fiscal stewardship; and
2. Direct staff to develop a temporary financial assistance program which offers zero-interest loans to eligible homeowners in King Salmon to offset insurance deductibles associated with flood damage; and
3. Direct staff to return to the Board with identified funding options, administrative structure and eligibility criteria for formal adoption.

**STRATEGIC PLAN:**

The recommended actions support the following areas of the Board of Supervisors' Strategic Plan:

Area of Focus: Safe & Healthy Communities

Strategic Plan Category: 1001 -Support and sustain partnerships between public safety and partner agencies to enhance public safety in our communities

**DISCUSSION:**

Recent tidal flooding, king tides and storm events have impacted the King Salmon community, resulting in property damage and financial hardship for several residents. While the scale of the incident does not meet the thresholds typically associated with a proclaimed disaster, affected homeowners are nonetheless facing significant out-of-pocket expenses related to insurance deductibles.

This Board-sponsored item seeks support to consider the development of a targeted, fiscally responsible assistance program in the form of zero-interest loans to help residents affected by flood damage bridge the financial gap while maintaining accountability for public funds.

The County of Humboldt has historically responded to major disasters, such as earthquake events, with coordinated emergency proclamations and recovery programs. However, the circumstances surrounding the King Salmon flooding event differ in several important ways:

- No local, state or federal emergency was proclaimed or declared for the flooding event, whereas both local and state emergencies were proclaimed following the December 2022 earthquake events;
- No homes have been red or yellow tagged due to flooding impacts, in contrast to the December 2022 earthquake events where approximately 70 homes were initially red tagged, and 114 homes were yellow tagged;
- The vast majority of homeowners in Humboldt County do not carry earthquake insurance, while flood insurance is a standard mortgage loan requirement for properties located within designated flood zones, which King Salmon is; and
- Only a small number of individuals have been displaced, and Humboldt Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD) has provided those residents with 30-day housing vouchers to address immediate needs.

These distinctions suggest that while the event has created hardship, the overall impact is more limited in scale and may be appropriately addressed through a targeted financial assistance program rather than a broader disaster response. A zero-interest loan program would:

- Provide short-term financial relief without creating a permanent grant obligation;
- Promote recovery and neighborhood stability;
- Demonstrate the county's commitment to supporting affected residents while maintaining prudent fiscal stewardship; and
- Ensure assistance is proportional to the scale of the incident.

Staff would be directed to develop program parameters that may include income considerations, verification of damage, insurance documentation, repayment terms and loan caps. Since insurance coverage is required in flood zones, this approach appropriately complements existing risk management mechanisms rather than replacing them.

As of Feb. 5, 2026, the county received a letter notification from the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) regarding a U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Physical Disaster Declaration. This declaration means that Humboldt County residents affected by the storm, tidal flooding and king tides event can now apply for federal assistance through a disaster loan program administered by the SBA. If the county wishes to not move forward with a zero-interest loan program, this option will lend assistance to the impacted residents.

**SOURCE OF FUNDING:**  
General Fund

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

To be determined.

**STAFFING IMPACT:**

Establishing and implementing a zero-interest loan program to assist homeowners King Salmon impacted by recent flooding will not impact current staffing levels. Should the Board direct staff to research and develop zero-interest loan program parameters and administer the program, staff workloads will increase.

**OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:**

None

**ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Board may choose not to pursue the establishment of a zero-interest Loan program to assist homeowners King Salmon impacted by recent flooding. However, doing so would leave impacted residents responsible for significant upfront costs with limited local support options. The Board could also consider a grant-based program; however, loans are recommended to balance compassion with fiscal responsibility.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Cal OES Letter dated Feb. 5, 2026

**PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:**

Meeting of: None

File No.: None