

*Rio Dell City Hall  
675 Wildwood Avenue  
Rio Dell, CA 95562  
(707) 764-3532  
cityofriodell.ca.gov*



March 18, 2025

TO: Rio Dell City Council

FROM: Kyle Knopp, City Manager

SUBJECT: Authorize the Mayor to Execute of Letter of Support for AB 262 (Caloza) the California Individual Assistance Act

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL:

Authorize the Mayor to sign the attached letter; or,

Amend and/or take no action.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

Summary of AB 262:

Existing law, the California Disaster Assistance Act, requires the Director of Emergency Services to provide financial assistance to local agencies for their personnel costs, equipment costs, and the cost of supplies and materials used during disaster response activities, incurred as a result of a state of emergency proclaimed by the Governor, subject to specified criteria. The act continuously appropriates moneys in the Disaster Assistance Fund and its subsidiary account, the Earthquake Emergency Investigations Account, without regard to fiscal year, for purposes of the act. This bill would enact the California Individual Assistance Act to establish a grant program to provide financial assistance to local agencies, community-based organizations, and individuals for specified costs related to a disaster, as prescribed. The bill would require the director to allocate from the fund, subject to specified conditions, funds to meet the cost of expenses for those purposes. By authorizing increased expenditure of moneys from a continuously appropriated fund for a new purpose, the bill would make an appropriation. This bill would require the director to adopt regulations, as determined to be necessary, to govern the administration of the program. This bill contains other related provisions. (Based on text date 1/16/2025)

Attachments: Letter  
Text of AB 262 as of 1/16/25

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March 18, 2025

The Honorable Jessica Caloza  
State Capitol – State Assembly  
P.O. Box 942849  
Sacramento, CA 94249-0052

**RE: AB 262 (Caloza) – Letter of Support for California Individual Assistance Act**

Dear Assembly Member Caloza,

The City of Rio Dell supports your efforts regarding AB 262, which would establish a grant program to provide financial assistance to local agencies, community-based organizations, and individuals for specified costs related to a disaster. We stand ready to assist you in any way possible to move this important legislation forward.

On December 20, 2022 Rio Dell was struck by a 6.4 magnitude earthquake and a series of aftershocks known as the 2022 Ferndale Earthquake. Ground sensor data shows that the ground acceleration from the earthquake was 1.4g in Rio Dell, which is the third highest level ever recorded during a California earthquake. The damage was severe, impacting one out of every four homes, temporarily interrupting water services and displacing approximately 300 residents. The estimated damages to Rio Dell alone are approximately \$32 million.

This event was not escalated to a federal disaster declaration despite the immense impact. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) disaster threshold for California is approximately \$72 million and growing, resulting in Rio Dell's \$32 million in damages being insufficient for a federal declaration. In smaller states such as Tennessee, the threshold is approximately \$9.8 million. We are under no illusion that FEMA, congress or the federal government will remedy this inequity anytime soon, or ever. The federal government played no role in response or recovery from the earthquakes with some exceptions being the Small Business Administration (SBA) and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). This is a major problem for all of California.

Rio Dell is a severely economically disadvantaged community. Household Income is \$36,648 according to the 2021 American Community Survey conducted by the US Census. Using the same source of data, this compares to \$54,752 for Humboldt County and \$84,907 for California. Under the California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA) Rio Dell is eligible for a 75 percent cost share with the state and possibly 100 percent covered (not guaranteed) since the City is AB 2140 compliant. The uncertainty of full reimbursement through these state programs creates great difficulty in planning and executing recovery projects, especially for an economically disadvantaged community.

Furthermore, as your important legislation seeks to address, CDAA is silent on one of the more important tools that a federal declaration provides: individual assistance (IA). Federal IA could have helped provide important disaster case management services, financial assistance for housing and for other needs of individuals amongst other support structures. Interestingly, we are learning that some other states already address the absence of federal IA that results from the inequitable threshold system. California leads the nation in so many important ways but it is important that we also address the fundamentals of a state that is subject to earthquakes, fires and floods on a regular basis. Where the federal government fails, we need the state to fill the void. It is time that California address this issue.

We appreciate your leadership on this issue. For these reasons and more, the City of Rio Dell **SUPPORTS AB 262.**

Sincerely,

Debra Garnes  
Mayor  
City of Rio Dell

Cc: Governor Gavin Newsom  
Senator Mike McGuire  
Assembly Member Chris Rogers  
Humboldt Cty. Board of Supervisors  
Humboldt County Mayors  
Director Nancy Ward, CalOES  
Sara Sanders, CalCities

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**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 262**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Caloza**

January 16, 2025

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An act to add Article 4.5 (commencing with Section 8688) to Chapter 7.5 of Division 1 of Title 2 of the Government Code, relating to disaster assistance, making an appropriation therefor, and declaring the urgency thereof, to take effect immediately.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

AB 262, as introduced, Caloza. California Individual Assistance Act.

Existing law, the California Disaster Assistance Act, requires the Director of Emergency Services to provide financial assistance to local agencies for their personnel costs, equipment costs, and the cost of supplies and materials used during disaster response activities, incurred as a result of a state of emergency proclaimed by the Governor, subject to specified criteria. The act continuously appropriates moneys in the Disaster Assistance Fund and its subsidiary account, the Earthquake Emergency Investigations Account, without regard to fiscal year, for purposes of the act.

This bill would enact the California Individual Assistance Act to establish a grant program to provide financial assistance to local agencies, community-based organizations, and individuals for specified costs related to a disaster, as prescribed. The bill would require the director to allocate from the fund, subject to specified conditions, funds to meet the cost of expenses for those purposes. By authorizing increased expenditure of moneys from a continuously appropriated fund for a new purpose, the bill would make an appropriation.

This bill would require the director to adopt regulations, as determined to be necessary, to govern the administration of the program.

This bill would declare that it is to take effect immediately as an urgency statute.

Vote:  $\frac{2}{3}$ . Appropriation: yes. Fiscal committee: yes.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares the purpose of this act is to establish in California a program within the Office of Emergency Services to quickly provide assistance to California residents following the declaration of a local or state emergency that may not warrant federal disaster assistance for individuals.

SEC. 2. Article 4.5 (commencing with Section 8688) is added to Chapter 7.5 of Division 1 of Title 2 of the Government Code, to read:

Article 4.5. California Individual Assistance Act

8688. This article shall be known and may be cited as the California Individual Assistance Act.

8688.1. It is the intent of the Legislature to provide local agencies, community-based organizations, and individuals with the assistance they need to quickly recover following a disaster.

8688.2. Unless the provision or context otherwise requires, the definitions in this section govern the construction of this article:

(a) "Community-based organization" means a public or private nonprofit organization of demonstrated effectiveness that represents a community or significant segments of a community and provides support and services to individuals in the community.

(b) "Disaster" means a fire, flood, storm, tidal wave or tsunami, earthquake, act of terrorism, epidemic, extreme heat or cold event, or other similar calamity that the Governor determines presents a threat to public safety.

(c) "Housing assistance" means assistance available to homeowners and renters to repair disaster-related damages not covered by insurance or by other governmental financial assistance programs, including, but not limited to, costs that are reasonable



1 and necessary to make the essential living areas of a primary  
2 residence safe, sanitary, and functional.

3 (d) "Individual" means a person residing in California.

4 (e) "Individual and family grants" means housing assistance  
5 and other needs assistance provided pursuant to this article.

6 (f) "Local emergency" means a condition of extreme peril to  
7 persons or property proclaimed as such by the governing body of  
8 the local agency affected, in accordance with Section 8630.

9 (g) "Other needs assistance" means assistance to offset expenses  
10 and losses in income not covered by insurance or by other financial  
11 assistance resources, including, but not limited to, any of the  
12 following:

13 (1) Income losses.

14 (2) Costs to clean, repair, or replace essential personal property  
15 items.

16 (3) Medical, dental, and funeral expenses resulting from the  
17 local emergency.

18 (4) Other potentially eligible expenses authorized by the director.

19 (h) "Unusual circumstances" means unavoidable delays that  
20 result from recurrence of a disaster, prolonged severe weather  
21 within a one-year period, or other conditions beyond the control  
22 of the applicant.

23 8688.3. (a) From the Disaster Assistance Fund, and subject to  
24 the conditions specified in this article, the director shall allocate  
25 funds to meet the cost of expenses for the purposes described in  
26 subdivision (b).

27 (b) Moneys from the Disaster Assistance Fund may be used to  
28 provide financial assistance to local agencies, community-based  
29 organizations, and individuals for the following purposes:

30 (1) To fund local agency and community-based organization  
31 personnel costs, equipment costs, translation services, and the cost  
32 of supplies and materials used during disaster response activities,  
33 incurred as a result of a state of emergency proclaimed by the  
34 Governor, excluding the normal hourly wage costs of employees  
35 engaged in emergency work activities.

36 (2) To reimburse local agencies or community-based  
37 organizations that provide individual and family grants.

38 (3) To provide direct individual and family grants, including  
39 housing assistance and other needs assistance, to individuals.

1 (4) To fund indirect administrative costs and any other assistance  
2 deemed necessary by the director.

3 (5) To fund necessary and required site preparation costs for  
4 evacuation and local assistance centers as deemed necessary by  
5 the director.

6 8688.4. (a) When certified by the director, claims of  
7 community-based organizations and local agencies shall be  
8 presented to the Controller for payment out of funds made available  
9 for that purpose.

10 (b) The director shall adopt regulations, as determined to be  
11 necessary, to govern the administration of the program authorized  
12 by this article in accordance with the Administrative Procedure  
13 Act (Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340) of Part 1 of  
14 Division 3). These regulations shall include specific eligibility  
15 requirements, a procedure for local agencies and community-based  
16 organizations to request the implementation of this article, and a  
17 method for evaluating these requests by the Office of Emergency  
18 Services.

19 8688.5. An allocation may be made to a local agency,  
20 community-based organization, or an individual, if, within 10 days  
21 after the actual occurrence of a disaster, the local agency has  
22 proclaimed a local emergency and that proclamation is acceptable  
23 to the director, or upon the order of the Governor when a state of  
24 emergency proclamation has been issued.

25 8688.6. A local agency, community-based organization, or an  
26 individual shall make application to the director for state financial  
27 assistance pursuant to this article within 60 days after the date of  
28 the proclamation of a local emergency. The director may extend  
29 the time for this filing only under unusual circumstances.

30 8688.7. The director shall develop procedures for a local agency  
31 or community-based organization to receive an advance of funds  
32 to expedite the delivery of individual and family grants following  
33 a disaster.

34 SEC. 3. This act is an urgency statute necessary for the  
35 immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety within  
36 the meaning of Article IV of the California Constitution and shall  
37 go into immediate effect. The facts constituting the necessity are:

1     In order to mitigate the extent and severe impact of recent  
2     disasters on individuals and families, the Legislature finds and  
3     declares it is necessary for this act to take effect immediately.

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