



NEWS RELEASE

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Supervisors further expand assistance for victims of the Hill and Woolsey fires

VENTURA, Calif. – The Board of Supervisors at their Dec. 4 meeting took additional steps to assist county residents affected by the Hill and Woolsey fires. In these three latest actions, the Board voted unanimously to establish a local debris removal program for the unincorporated areas of the county and authorize the California Office of Emergency Services debris removal program; waive some planning, building, environmental health and Fire Protection District fees; and authorize one-time water bill adjustments in Bell Canyon for excess water used during the Woolsey Fire.

“Through these actions, the Board has again demonstrated their commitment to county residents who have been devastated by wildfires,” said Mike Powers, County Executive Officer. “By establishing the debris removal programs and waiving certain fees, they are jump-starting the recovery and rebuilding process. And there seems to be little doubt the extra water used in Bell Canyon helped to save homes there.”

Fire debris that remains on properties after the removal of hazardous materials still represents a threat to public health. The timely and proper removal of that debris is in the best interest of the community and the health of the residents. So, the County is making available both the Local Fire Debris Removal Program and, in partnership with the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services, a state-sponsored program. The state program allows residents to have their debris cleared at no cost except for any insurance coverage for debris removal a property owner might have.

The Board’s action on fee waivers makes available the program adopted after the Thomas Fire to include victims of the Woolsey and Hill fires. The program also allows for temporary housing on properties where homes were destroyed by the fires.

The above actions are just the latest in a series taken by the County to support fire victims, which among many other actions, include: conducting an ongoing series of informational town hall meetings, opening and operating the multi-agency Local Assistance Center shortly after the start of the fire, making available a local rental assistance program, providing mental health services to individuals impacted by the fires, replacement of vital records at no cost, and both disseminating educational information and conducting sessions on erosion control and debris flow risks.

During the Woolsey Fire, many property owners in Bell Canyon elected to stay with their properties to attempt to protect them from the fire. The County anticipates many of these Bell Canyon



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residents will have much higher than normal water bills due to the water they used to protect their properties and the properties of their neighbors.

“Although we urge everyone to please obey evacuation orders, these Bell Canyon residents performed a heroic service to their community at large and they will not be charged more than their average usage,” said Powers.

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