



King County
Emergency Management

Wildfire Protection Planning in King County

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Bolt Creek Fire, 2022
(Source: Inciweb)

Wildfire in Western Washington

- Current outlook indicates normal wildfire risk through June ¹
- Risk is seasonally dependent (highest from ~August-October) ²
- Two “types” of wildfire we may experience here:
 - **Probable:** low- to moderate - intensity wildfires
 - Smaller and manageable with standard firefighting
 - **Possible:** large, fast-moving high severity wildfire
 - Most likely during dry, late summer conditions with an east wind event ³

¹ “National Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook,” National Interagency Fire Center, April 1, 2025, www.nifc.gov/nicc-files/predictive/outlooks/monthly_seasonal_outlook.pdf

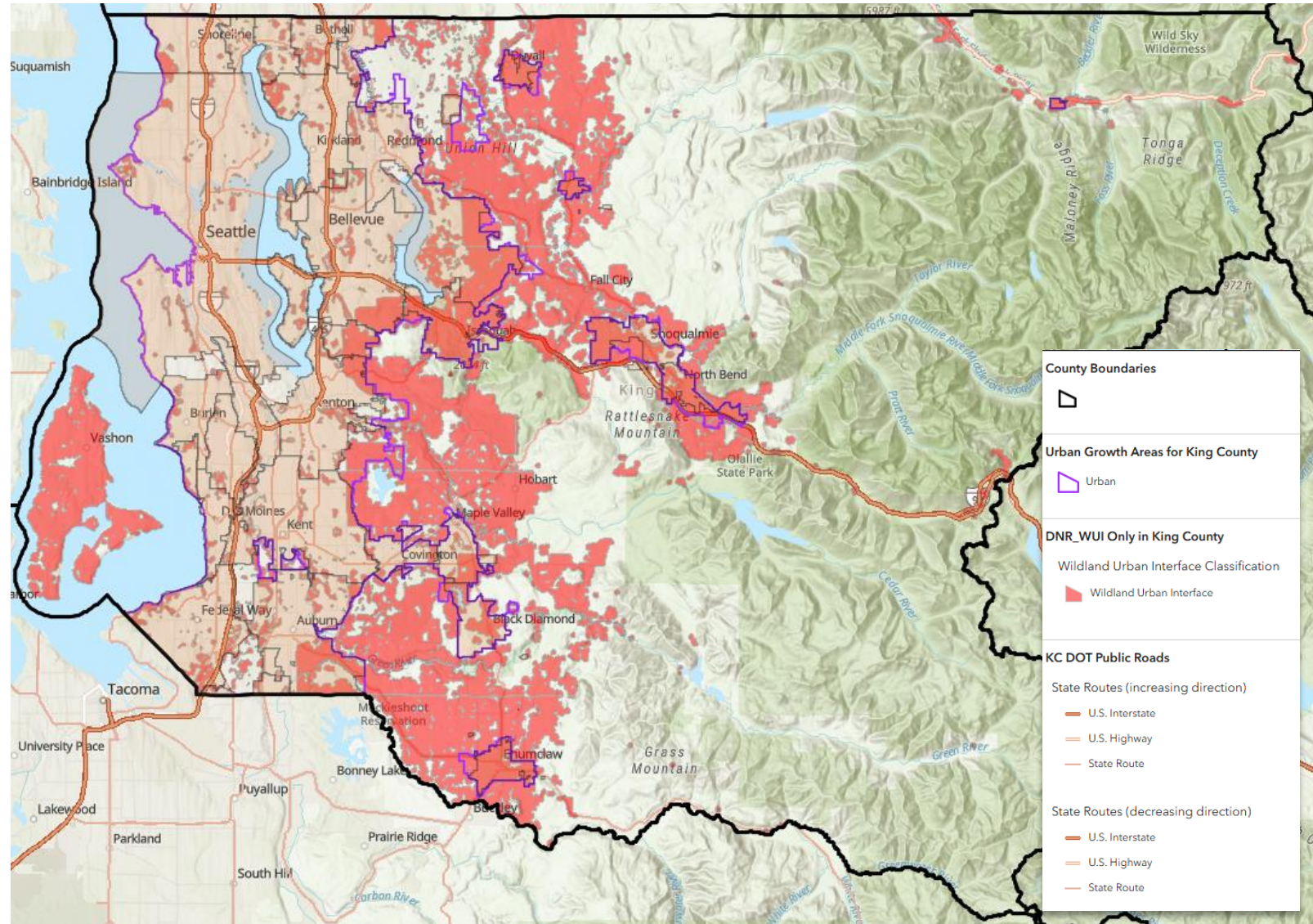
² “Red Flag Warnings 2006-2022 for Fire Weather Zone 657,” National Weather Service – Seattle

³ Halofsky, Joshua, “Western WA Wildfire: Ecology, Risks, and Strategies,” WA DNR



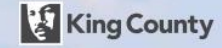
King County Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)

- **Not a risk map; indicates areas interfacing and intermixing with wildland**
 - More than 352,000 residents
 - Varying levels of awareness and preparedness
- **Important preparedness role**
 - Evacuation planning
 - Home hardening
 - Community-level mitigation
- **Areas for improvement**
 - Codes/zoning
 - Planning and preparedness
 - Public education and mitigation support



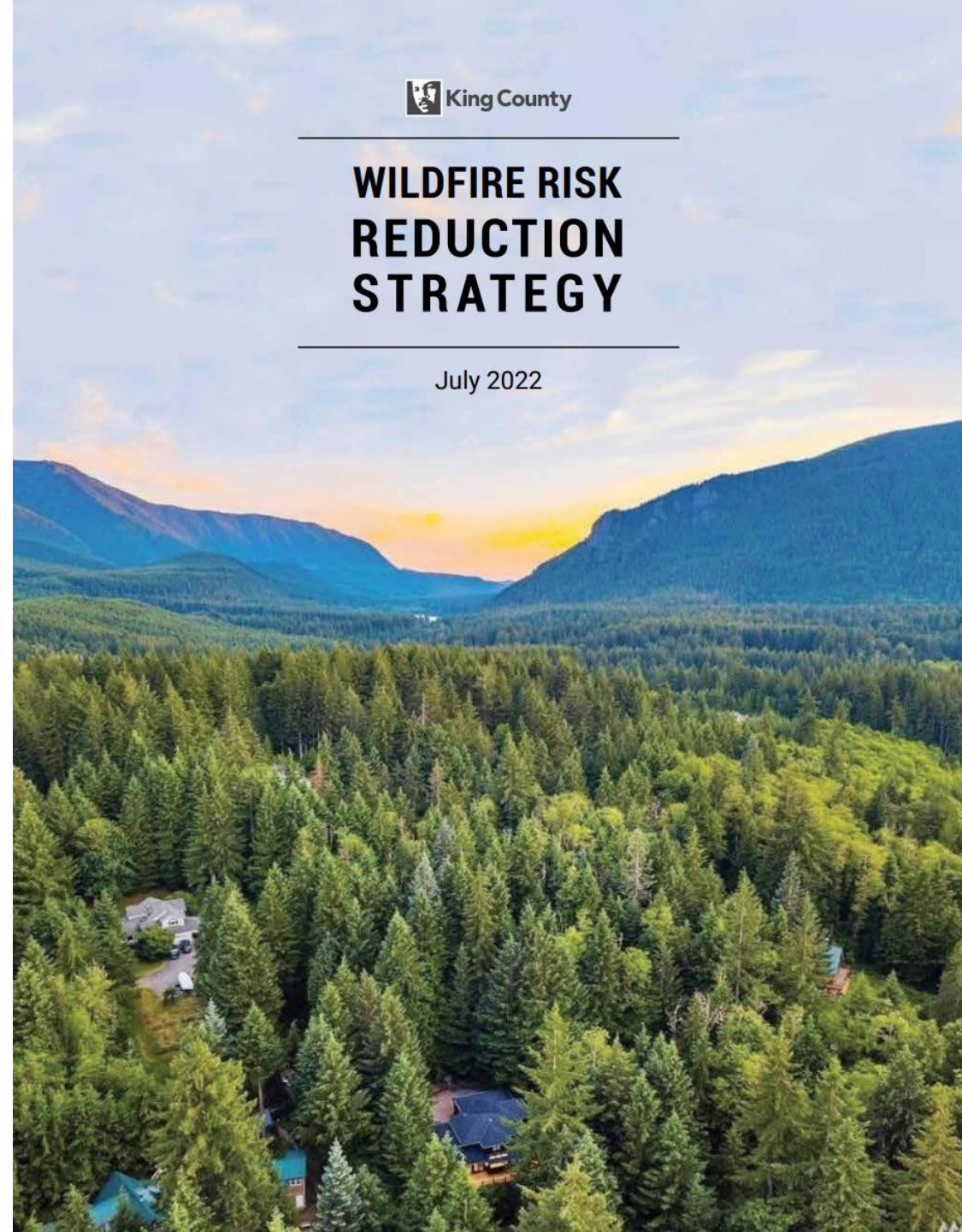
King County Wildfire Risk Reduction Strategy

- 12 recommended strategic actions in 3 strategic priority areas:
 - Forest Resilience
 - Wildland Urban Interface
 - Emergency Response
- Examples include:
 - Promoting species and structural diversity within King County forests
 - Develop community wildfire plans
 - Implement the “Ready, Set, Go!” public education evacuation program
 - Enhance and expand opportunities for shared learning and coordination
- Coming soon: kingcounty.gov/wildfire



WILDFIRE RISK REDUCTION STRATEGY

July 2022



King County Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (RHMP)

- Hazard description includes fires and smoke from fires
- Potential to compound other hazards, such as landslides and flooding
- Overall risk level: HIGH
- Example mitigation strategies
 - Develop and implement Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)
 - OEM
 - Support individual wildfire mitigation work in WUI communities
 - King Conservation District



2025 - 2030



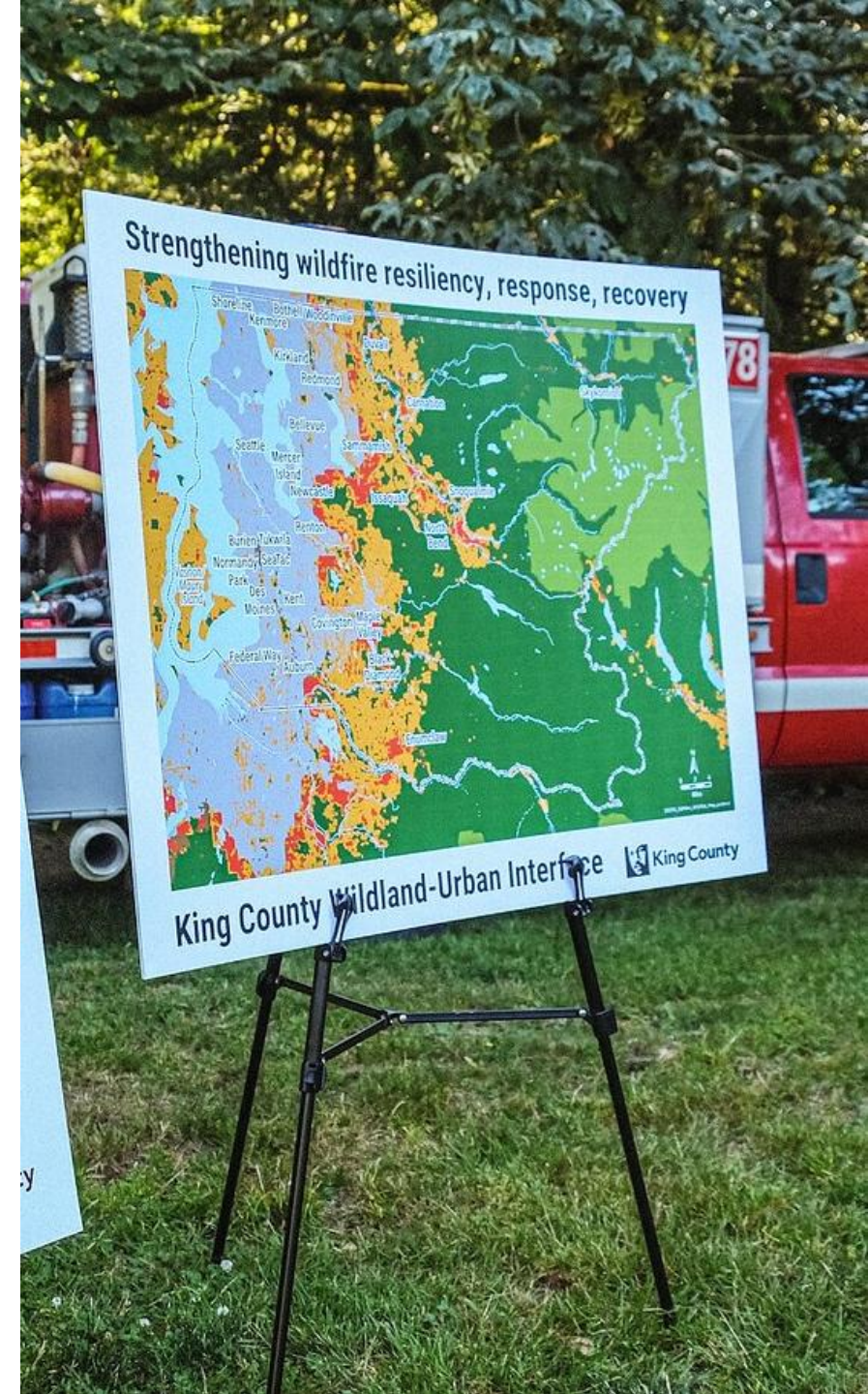
King County Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan



King County

King County Emergency Management Role

- **Planning**
 - Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)
 - Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan
 - Recovery Plan
- **Response Operations**
 - 24/7 on-call Duty Officer
 - Regional Emergency Operations Center coordination
 - Situational awareness
 - Resource management
- **Engaging Partners**
 - Wildfire Mitigation Working Group
 - Wildfire coordination calls during wildfire season
 - CWPP planning process
- **Public Education**
 - Ongoing outreach
 - **“Ready, Set, Go!”** Messaging campaign
 - CWPP Public Survey
 - All-hazard preparedness education



Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)

- **What is a CWPP?**
 - Collaborative plan that identifies & prioritizes ways to reduce risk of destructive wildfire
- **What will be included?**
 - Wildfire hazard assessment map
 - An analysis of local wildfire history
 - Risk reduction strategies and action plan
 - Recommendations for King County residents
 - Localized chapters for jurisdictions/fire districts (optional)
- **Who is involved?**
 - **Subject matter experts** → Core Planning Team
 - **Local leaders** → Mitigation Workshops (launching May 1)
 - **Community members** → CWPP survey, direct outreach & engagement

Estimated CWPP Planning Timeline



What Community Members Can do to Prepare

- **Preparedness**
 - Make emergency plans, assemble go-kits, get to know neighbors
 - Consider evacuation route options
- **Awareness**
 - Sign up for ALERT King County (kingcounty.gov/ALERT)
 - Pay attention to Red Flag Warnings and burn bans (90 percent of fires in WA are human caused) ¹
- **Involvement in CWPP**
 - Survey responses will inform plan development
- **Prevention**
 - Follow best practices for home protection from embers
 - 5+ ft non-flammable space around home
 - Fire-resistant building materials and landscaping

¹ “Wildfire Resources” WA DNR: <https://www.dnr.wa.gov/programs-and-services/wildfire-resources>



Ready, Set, Go!

- King County's all-hazard evacuation messaging campaign:
 - **Level 1: Ready** - Possible evacuation
 - **Level 2: Set** - Short notice evacuation likely
 - **Level 3: Go!** - Evacuate immediately
- Depending on the urgency of the situation, may skip steps
- Community members encouraged to have their own plans, be prepared, and stay aware
- King County Emergency Management is partnering with 12 counties across Western Washington to align Ready, Set, Go! messaging

KING COUNTY
WILDFIRE EVACUATION LEVELS 1 2 3

LEVEL 1 READY *Possible evacuation in your area*

Be aware of the danger in your area and start preparing to evacuate

- Monitor local media and check on neighbors
- Update your GO! kit
- Review your plan - check evacuation routes and shelter locations
- Prepare both the inside and outside of your home
- Leave if you feel unsafe

LEVEL 2 SET *Short notice evacuation likely in your area*

Be prepared for sudden evacuation - leave now if you need extra time

- Ensure your evacuation checklist is complete
- Ensure your GO! kit is in your evacuation vehicle
- Continue to monitor local media
- Leave if you feel unsafe

LEVEL 3 GO! *Evacuate immediately from your area*

Leave now! Danger in your area

- Follow directions from police or fire departments
- Do not return home until officials have determined it is safe

GO! KIT Learn more about the supplies and tools you'll need to evacuate at WWW.KINGCOUNTY.GOV/WILDFIRE

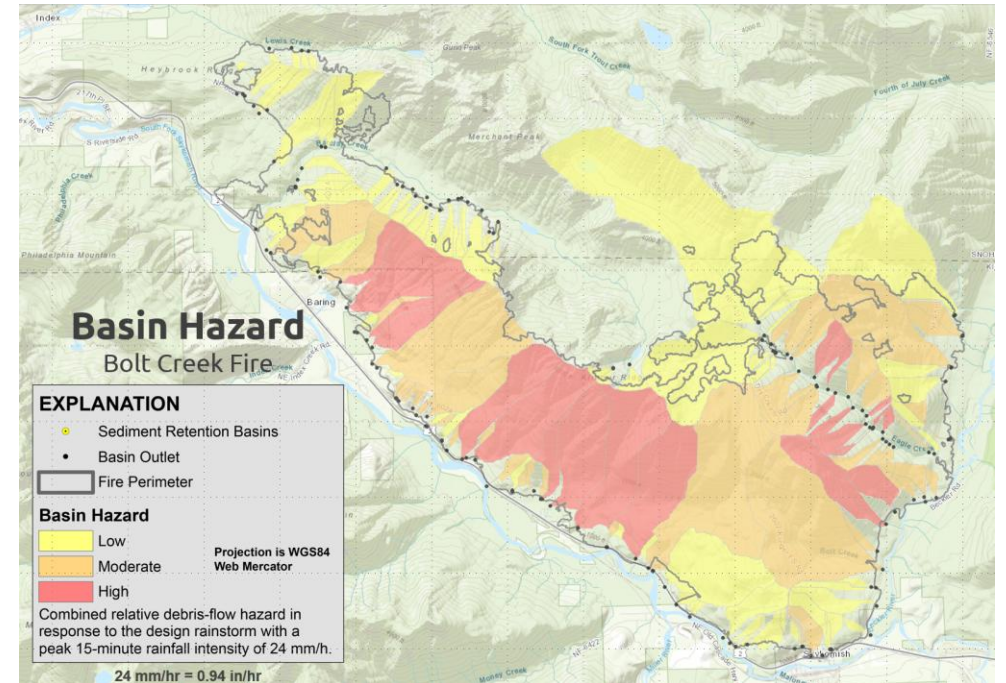
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal documents, photos, and valuables	<input type="checkbox"/> Child and pet care supplies
<input type="checkbox"/> Battery powered weather radio	<input type="checkbox"/> Toiletries
<input type="checkbox"/> Flashlights and extra batteries	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone and chargers
<input type="checkbox"/> Three-day supply of food and water (one gallon of water per person per day)	<input type="checkbox"/> Extra clothing
<input type="checkbox"/> Medications	<input type="checkbox"/> Toilet paper
	<input type="checkbox"/> Tool kit
	<input type="checkbox"/> Important contact numbers
	<input type="checkbox"/> Comfort or entertainment items

ALERT King County
Be alert and stay informed. Sign up to receive emergency alerts on a phone or email.
WWW.KINGCOUNTY.GOV/ALERT

King County Emergency Blog
Find up-to-date information on emergencies
WWW.KCEMERGENCY.COM

Fires and Landslide Risk

- Risk depends greatly on the condition of surficial soils and vegetation within geologically hazardous areas
- Many unknowns in western Washington
- Hazards of flooding and debris flow
- Mitigation and Protection measures
 - Reforestation by landowners
 - WS DOT installed debris fencing along US-2
 - Skykomish area evacuation alternatives report
 - ALERT King County and pre-scripted messaging
 - NOAA radio transmitter
 - Telemetered weather stations
 - Regular monitoring (partnerships with US Forest Service, DNR, DLS, NWS, KCSO, others)



FEMA Preparedness and Mitigation Funding

- 11 of King County Emergency Management's 26 staff members are funded by FEMA grants
 - Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG)
 - State Homeland Security Grant (SHSP)
 - Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI)
 - Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)
 - Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)
- FEMA recently canceled the BRIC program
- Uncertainty on future of grants and future of FEMA
- **Emergencies will always start and end at the local level**



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Questions?