



## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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Date: July 2, 2025

To: Erin McMahon, Director, Oregon Office of Emergency

From: Sheridan McClellan, Emergency Manager, Wasco County Sheriff's Office

Subject: Request for State Application for FEMA SBA Disaster Assistance for Wasco County

### Purpose

Wasco County respectfully requests that the State of Oregon submit an application to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) disaster assistance on behalf of residents and businesses impacted by a recent major wildfire in Wasco County. The flood event in Harney County, with \$22 million in damages and failure to meet FEMA's Individual Assistance (IA) threshold, is the primary reason for pursuing SBA assistance to address urgent recovery needs in Wasco County, compounded by the significant community impact of the wildfire.

### Background

Wasco County suffered a major wildfire event on June 11 2025, which destroyed numerous homes and is significantly impacting the community, causing widespread losses to residents and businesses. Additionally, the recent flood event in Harney County resulted in \$22 million in damages to homes, businesses, and infrastructure but did not meet FEMA's IA program threshold, which requires widespread uninsured losses and significant impacts to individuals and households. The precedent set by the Harney County flood, combined with the ongoing wildfire recovery needs in Wasco County, justifies the pursuit of SBA's Disaster Loan Program, which offers low-interest loans to homeowners, renters, businesses, and nonprofits as an alternative to IA.

### Rationale for SBA Assistance

**Wasco County Wildfire Impact:** The recent wildfire in Wasco County destroyed numerous homes and is adversely impacting the community, exacerbating economic and social challenges. While these damages may not meet IA thresholds due to factors such as insurance coverage or the scale of impacted households, they qualify for SBA loans to fund rebuilding, business recovery, and mitigation efforts.

**Urgent Community Needs:** The Wasco County's wildfire has displaced residents, damaged businesses, and disrupted livelihoods. SBA loans can fund home repairs, business recovery, and mitigation projects (e.g., fire-resistant upgrades), ensuring long-term resilience.

Precedent for SBA Support: Recent disasters, such as the January 2025 Los Angeles County wildfires, show SBA loans provided substantial recovery funds (\$619.2 million approved) when IA thresholds were not met. Wasco County seeks similar support to address its wildfire recovery needs.

#### Request

Wasco County requests that the State of Oregon promptly submit a request to FEMA for a federal disaster declaration to activate the SBA's Disaster Loan Program for Wasco County. This declaration will enable affected residents, businesses, and nonprofits to apply for low-interest loans to address wildfire-related damages. We recommend the state highlight the destruction of numerous homes in Wasco County's wildfire to support the request.

#### Next Steps

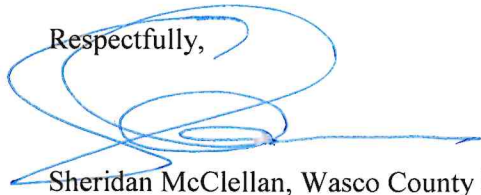
To support the application, Wasco County will:

- Provide detailed damage assessments, including documentation of the homes destroyed in the wildfire, to the state within [specify timeline, e.g., 5 business days].
- Coordinate with Rowena Fire Recovery Incident Command and community leaders to identify eligible applicants.
- Promote awareness of SBA assistance through local channels, ensuring residents and businesses can apply.

For further information or to coordinate response efforts, please contact:

Sheridan McClellan, Emergency Manager  
Wasco County Emergency Management  
Email: [sheridanm@co.wasco.or.us](mailto:sheridanm@co.wasco.or.us)  
Phone: 541-980-0200

Respectfully,



Sheridan McClellan, Wasco County Emergency Manager

**Cc:** Wasco Board of County Commissioners