



Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority

UMRWA Regular Governing Board Meeting

Agenda

Friday, July 23, 2021 – 1:30 p.m.

McLean Hall, Pardee Center, Valley Springs, CA 95252

ROLL CALL

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PUBLIC COMMENT: When responding to a matter not on the agenda, state law limits a Board member to providing a brief response, asking clarifying questions, and/or referring it to staff.

AUTHORITY BUSINESS:

	<u>Recommended Action</u>
1. Board Meeting Minutes of April 23, 2021	Approve by Motion
2. Treasurer's Report – Second Quarter FY 2021	Accept for Filing
3. MAC Region IRWM Update (Presentation)	Discussion/Possible Action
4. Forest Projects Report (Presentation)	Approve by Motion
5. Fiscal Year 2022 Budget	Approve by Motion
6. Legislative Issues Update	Discussion/Possible Action

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

7. Board Member Comments

EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT:

8. Executive Officer's Oral Report

ADJOURNMENT:

- Next Regular Board Meeting: October TBD*, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. (Pardee Lodge, Pardee Center)
*Dates for the October meeting were not available as of this agenda publication but will be provided at the meeting.

Requests for disability-related modification or accommodation, including auxiliary aids or services, may be made to Lisa Stuart at 209.772.8261 or lisa.stuart@ebmud.com no later than 24 hours before the meeting.



Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority

Agenda No: **1**

Meeting Date: July 23, 2021

Title:

Meeting Minutes of April 23, 2021

Recommended Action:

Approve the regular meeting minutes of April 23, 2021.

Summary:

The summary minutes of the April 23, 2021 meeting are included for Board review and approval.

Friday, April 23, 2021 – 1:30 p.m.
Governing Board Regular Meeting
Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority
via WebEx and at the Mokelumne Watershed Office,
15083 Camanche Parkway South, Valley Springs, CA 95252

Summary Minutes

ROLL CALL

Directors John Coleman, Terry Woodrow, Brian Oneto, Jack Garamendi, Richard Farrington, Richard Blood, and Ed Gonzalez were present at the meeting. Absent: Jeff Davidson, Calaveras County Water District. Also present were Executive Officer Richard Sykes, Administrative Officer Rob Alcott, Authority Secretary Lisa Stuart, and 10 visitors.

PUBLIC COMMENT – none.

AUTHORITY BUSINESS

1. Regular Meeting Minutes of January 22, 2021

Motion 06-21 to approve the regular meeting minutes of January 22, 2021 was made by Director Farrington, seconded by Director Woodrow and carried by roll call vote: Yea 7 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

2. Treasurer’s Report – First Quarter FY 2021

A copy of the Treasurer’s Report for the First Quarter of fiscal year 2021, which ended December 31, 2020, was presented to the Board.

Motion 07-21 to accept the Treasurer’s Report for filing was made by Director Farrington, seconded by Director Blood and carried by roll call vote: Yea 7 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

3. Forest Projects Report

The Forest Projects Report included a recommended Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Blue Forest Finance to explore potential funding and financing options for future Mokelumne Watershed forest health projects. Also included is a summary of the Forest Projects Plan (FPP) that UMRWA is developing, and for which grant funding is being sought. The State of California appears poised to begin committing substantial new resources towards implementing forest health projects in response to the recent devastating wildfires. As such, staff is recommending the Board schedule a Board Planning Workshop to discuss the FPP’s development and UMRWA’s role in an expanded forest health program in the Mokelumne Watershed.

The Executive Officer provided a resolution which would authorize him to submit grant applications when submittal deadlines make specific Board approval of such applications difficult. The Board recommended additional language be added to the resolution before approval which would require the EO to provide grant information to the Chair prior to submittal, allowing the Chair to determine if a special meeting should be called prior to final application submittal. Also discussed were an amendment to Ronwright’s Black Springs General Services Agreement to complete nearly 18 acres of mastication work in the Fore project area and information on the status of previously approved fuels treatment

projects and contracts. The EO discussed work on an MOU or other vehicle for USFS/UMRWA coordination on the FPP and that some form of agreement would be discussed at the next board meeting.

Motion 08-21 to (1) approve the Memorandum of Understanding with Blue Forest Finance, (2) approve the scheduling of a Board Planning Workshop in October 2021 to discuss the Forest Projects Plan, (3) approve Resolution No. 2021-01 regarding grant applications, and (4) approve Amendment 1 to Ronwright agreement was made by Director Farrington, seconded by Director Gonzalez and carried by roll call vote: Yea 7 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

4. Fiscal Year 2022 Budget

The Board was provided with the proposed FY 2022 budget information. The total member-supported portion of the proposed budget is \$302,725 (\$8,000 less than the current fiscal year). The budget is organized into the Authority's two primary revenue sources: Member funding and non-Member funding (grant and USFS funding). The Authority's work activities planned for FY 2022 were also summarized for the Board.

Motion 09-21 to endorse the proposed FY 2022 UMRWA budget and authorize staff to transmit the proposed budget to Member Agencies for review and comment was made by Director Farrington, seconded by Director Garamendi and carried by roll call vote: Yea 7 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

5. Legislative Issues Update

Information on three bills (AB 697, AB 1570 and SB 804) was provided by EBMUD staff and included in the agenda packet. These bills will have a beneficial impact on forest health efforts in California. The EBMUD board of directors voted to support these bills on April 13, 2021. The Board also discussed AB 297 with Director Farrington requesting UMRWA endorse this one as well.

Motion 10-21 directing staff to submit letters of support on behalf of UMRWA to the authors of AB 697, AB 1570, SB 804, and AB 297 based on a quorum of member agency support for each absent any opposition was made by Director Gonzalez, seconded by Director Farrington and carried by roll call vote: Yea 7 – Nay 0 – Abstain 0.

Board Member Comments: Director Gonzalez provided information regarding Jackson Valley Irrigation District's water supply and that they are looking for a water transfer from the Amador Water Agency.

Executive Officer Comments: The EO stated that if California moves forward with reopening plans in June, he's expecting the July UMRWA meeting will be held in person at Pardee Center.

ADJOURNMENT: Director Coleman adjourned the meeting at 2:39 p.m. The next regular meeting will be held on July 23, 2021 at 1:30 p.m. at a location to be determined based on the State's reopening measures at the time of the meeting.

SUBMITTED BY:

Lisa Stuart, Authority Secretary

John Coleman, Chair of the Board
APPROVED: July 23, 2021



Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority

Agenda No: **2**

Meeting Date: July 23, 2021

Title:

Treasurer's Report – Second Quarter FY 2021

Recommended Actions:

Accept for filing

Summary:

A copy of the Treasurer's Report for the Second Quarter of fiscal year 2021, which ended March 31, 2021, is included here and will be presented at the Board meeting.

**UPPER MOKELUMNE RIVER WATERSHED AUTHORITY
TREASURER'S REPORT
STATEMENT FOR THE PERIOD ENDING MARCH 31, 2021**

Fiscal Year 2021 (beginning Oct. 1, 2020)	Assessment, Grants & USFS	Budget FY 2021	Actual		
			Current Quarter	YTD	YTD %
General Assessments & Operating Revenue					
Amador Agencies Funding	35,044	35,044	-	35,044	100%
Calaveras Agencies Funding	41,546	41,546	-	41,546	100%
EBMUD Funding	81,910	81,910	-	81,910	100%
Member Agencies Contribution	158,500	158,500	-	158,500	100%
Prior Year Unspent/Carry forward	31,500	31,500	-	-	0%
Indirect Fee Revenues (Collected FY2020)	103,000	103,000	-	-	0%
Interest/Misc income	1,000	1,000	102	109	11%
Operating Reserve (Bal. \$408,444)	-	-	-	-	-
Misc Revenue	135,500	135,500	102	109	0%
Total Assessments & Operations Funding	294,000	294,000	102	158,609	54%
IRWM Grant Funding					
CCWD - West Point WTP (Prop 1)	527,287	527,287	-	-	0%
Prop 1 Grant Administration	29,160	29,160	-	-	0%
Forestry/Watershed Funding					
US Forest Service (West Calaveras Thin)	115,305	115,305	-	(4,694)	-4%
US Forest Service (Cabbage Patch)	-	-	-	(1,156)	-
Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant 2 (Cabbage Patch)	51,354	51,354	8,385	19,603	38%
Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant 3 (Black Springs w/ WCT)	490,514	490,514	211,000	276,088	56%
Sierra Nevada Conservancy Mapping Tool Grant	7,392	7,392	4,145	4,145	56%
NFWF (Eldorado NF Culvert Upgrades)	610,909	610,909	343,866	343,866	56%
Sierra Nevada Conservancy Planning/NEPA Grant (pending)	150,000	150,000	-	-	0%
Total Grants and Other Funding	1,981,921	1,981,921	567,396	637,852	32%
TOTAL REVENUES & FUNDING	2,275,921	2,275,921	567,498	796,461	35%
ASSESSMENT EXPENDITURES					
General Assessment (Administration)					
Executive Officer		50,000	5,302	12,887	26%
Administrative Officer		50,000	5,040	11,830	24%
Website Support (Woodard & Curran)		20,000	-	1,650	8%
General Assessment (Operations)					
MLLT - STE Watershed Program CY 2020&2021 (w/\$16,500 carry forward)		33,000	-	11,309	34%
Inter-agency liaison & Board support (LEI, Inc)		10,000	-	1,149	11%
Forest-related Grant Applications/Project Development		40,000	-	7,010	18%
Collaborative Forest Projects Plan		50,000	-	-	0%
IRWM Grant Application/Project Development		25,000	-	-	0%
MAC Projects Update 2020 (Woodard & Curran) (w/\$15,000 carry forward)		15,000	-	-	0%
TOTAL ASSESSMENT EXPENDITURES		293,000	10,342	45,835	16%
GRANT and FORESTRY/WATERSHED FUNDING EXPENDITURES					
DWR Prop 1 Implementation Grant					
CCWD - West Point WTP		527,287	-	-	0%
Woodard & Curran - invoicing & reporting		24,972	-	-	0%
WRA - agreement administration		4,000	-	-	0%
Cabbage Patch Restoration Project					
Landmark Environmental Inc.		3,459	7,989	9,664	279%
Contractors		41,117	-	9,682	24%
Black Springs Restoration Project					
Landmark Environmental Inc.		17,920	2,696	5,726	32%
Ronwright Logging Lumber Inc. (RFP 19-01)		88,635	-	59,850	68%
Greater Valley Conservation Corp		32,962	-	-	0%
Sierra Nevada Forestry Service		143,107	-	59,138	41%
NFWF - Culvert Upgrade Project					
Landmark Environmental Inc.		49,883	4,220	15,620	31%
KW Emerson, Inc.		581,082	-	336,059	58%
West Calaveras Thin/Bailey Project					
Tanner Logging, Inc.		165,350	-	142,800	86%
Landmark Environmental, Inc.		5,896	-	1,242	21%
SNC - Mapping Tool Project					
Landmark Environmental Inc.		6,265	2,306	5,909	94%
TOTAL GRANT EXPENDITURES		1,691,935	17,211	645,690	38%
Total Project Expenses		1,984,935	27,553	691,525	35%



Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority

Agenda No: **3**

Meeting Date: July 23, 2021

Title:

MAC Region IRWM Update

Recommended Actions:

For information/possible action

Summary:

Katie Cole (Woodard & Curran) will present an update to the Board on two planned and ongoing MAC Region initiatives:

(1) The stakeholder Regional Participants Committee (RPC) will be convened later this year to update the MAC Plan list of eligible implementation projects. Planned update task activities include conducting a call for projects, scoring and ranking projects received, preparing an updated project list incorporating the new projects, and appending the MAC Plan with the updated project list.

(2) The status of West Point Water Supply Reliability Project: The Department of Water Resources in July 2020 awarded UMRWA a \$556,447 Proposition 1 IRWM Implementation Grant. Funding from this grant is passed through to Calaveras County Water District for the West Point Water Supply Reliability Project. CCWD project design is in progress.

Work is also progressing on the MAC/TSTAN Regions Disadvantaged Community (DAC) needs assessment. Key water and wastewater issues faced by area DAC's will be identified through assessment surveys. The results will identify potential MAC Plan implementation projects and be used to guide future potential grant procurement efforts.



Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority

Agenda No: **4**

Meeting Date: July 23, 2021

Title:

Forest Projects Report

Recommended Actions:

- 1) Authorize the Executive Officer's signature and approve the Grant Agreement with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy for \$200,000 to fund initial the initial phase of the Forest Projects Plan.
- 2) Approve a \$10,000 contribution to the Mattley Meadow Restoration Project. Funding is available in the current FY 2021 budget using projected end-of-year unspent funds.

Summary:

This Forest Projects Report includes a presentation on the Forest Projects Plan and an associated demonstration of the recently completed Mapping Tool. Other topics addressed below include the status of recent forest health related grant applications, a request by Plumas Corporation for cost-share dollars to support Mattley Meadow Restoration Project implementation, and the UMRWA Forest Projects status table.

Forest Projects Plan and Mapping Tool:

Karen Quidachay will present an update on the Authority's efforts to develop the Forest Projects Plan. This will be followed by a demonstration by Megan Layhee of the Mapping Tool.

The Forest Projects Plan initiative is a critical next step to addressing the Upper Mokelumne's wildfire risk. The number of remaining NEPA/CEQA certified projects currently eligible for fuels treatment implementation on USFS land in the Mokelumne Watershed is severely limited. Following consultations with Calaveras Ranger District and Amador Ranger District staff and members of the ACCG Strategic Landscape Assessment Work Group, UMRWA is taking the lead in developing a Forest Projects Plan (FPP) for a large area of the Upper Mokelumne watershed.

The fundamental goal of the FPP will be to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires in the Upper Mokelumne River watershed as quickly as possible. This goal will be achieved by seeking grants and other funding to implement projects identified in the FPP that reduce forest fuel loads and forest ladder fuels in strategically selected Calaveras NF and Eldorado NF locations in the shortest timeframe possible.

Status of Grant Applications:

To underwrite the significant costs for preparing a landscape-wide Forest Projects Plan for the Upper Mokelumne region UMRWA has submitted three separate grant applications.

- On June 3, 2021 the SNC Board of Directors unanimously approved a \$200,000 grant award to UMRWA for the initial elements of the Forest Projects Plan and authorized its staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation. The UMRWA EO signed the grant on June 16, 2021. The UMRWA Board should authorize that signature and approve the agreement to complete approval for this grant.
- UMRWA was notified on June 16 that our \$472,000 Prop 1 grant proposal was not selected for funding by the CA Department of Fish and Wildlife. UMRWA’s proposal, submitted in February, was one of 128 submitted. Total requested funding exceeded the amount available.
- On May 19 a \$4,997,160 grant proposal was submitted for Prop 1 funding being administered by CalFire under the California Climate Investments (CCI) Forest Health Grant Program. No award decisions have yet been announced.

Mattley Meadows Restoration – Plumas Corporation Request for Funding Support:

Last year UMRWA completed and certified the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Mattley Meadows Project. The project’s sponsor, Plumas Corporation, was unable to secure funding to implement the project last year but continues to apply for grants to enable this important project to proceed. One of the reasons Plumas Corporation was not successful last year is that they had no cost-share funding for the project. Earlier this month they submitted a grant application to the Wildlife Conservation Board’s Riparian Habitat Conservation Program. Concurrent with that application, Plumas Corp has requested UMRWA to contribute \$10,000 in cost-share funding for project implementation. Staff recommends a \$10,000 contribution to the Mattley Meadow Restoration Project. Funding is available in the current FY 2021 budget using projected end-of-year unspent funds.

Forest Projects Status:

UMRWA FOREST PROJECTS & CONTRACTS						
RFP #	Contractor	Contract Date	Amount	Scheduled Completion	Actual Completion	Total Acres
PUMPKIN HOLLOW – COMPLETED and CLOSED OUT						
Various	Six (6) contractors	2017/2018	\$905,645	Dec. 2019	Nov. 2019	927.5
CABBAGE PATCH - COMPLETED and CLOSED OUT (as of Dec. 31, 2020)						
18-03	GTS Forestry	July 2018	\$78,327	Dec. 2019	Nov. 2019	183.8
18-04	D. Watt Industries	July 2018	\$96,880	Dec. 2019	Nov. 2019	120.2
N/A	GVCC	July 2018	\$10,800	Dec. 2019	Oct. 2019	3.5
						307.5
BLACK SPRINGS						
19-01	Ronwright	July 2019	\$144,020	Dec. 2021		151.6
19-02	Sierra Nevada Forestry	July 2019	\$297,616	Dec. 2021		812.2

N/A	GVCC	July 2019	\$ 32,962	Dec. 2021		12.8
						976.6
FORE						
19-03	Ronwright	July 2019	\$ 180,907	Nov. 2020	Nov. 2020	131.3
WEST CALAVERAS THIN/BAILEY						
20-03	Tanner Logging	August 2020	\$407,410	Dec. 2021	Dec. 2020	259.5
PROJECT TOTALS			\$2,154,567			2,592.4



Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority

Agenda No: **5**

Meeting Date: July 23, 2021

Title:

Fiscal Year 2022 Budget

Recommended Action:

(1) Approve the FY 2022 UMRWA budget and authorize staff to transmit invoices to Member Agencies requesting payment of FY 2022 assessments by October 31, 2021.

(2) Grant JVID a one-year deferral of its FY 2022 assessment payment (\$4,604) and offset that deferral by approving the transfer of \$4,604 from Reserves to FY 2022 budget.

Summary:

The Board on April 23 reviewed the proposed FY 2022 Budget and directed staff to transmit the proposed budget to Member Agencies for review and comment. A memorandum presenting the proposed FY 2022 budget and agency assessments was sent on May 24 to Member Agency General Managers and County Administrative Officers with copies to each Member Agency's UMRWA Board director. EBMUD replied with no comments. In its comments JVID requested a waiver of their FY 2022 assessment (\$4,604).

Discussion:

The proposed FY 2022 budget is presented in Table 1. The total member-supported portion of the proposed budget is \$302,725 (\$8,000 less than the current fiscal year).

Presented in Table 2 are member funding offsets. These include in-kind contributions by Amador County and EBMUD along with indirect revenues associated with USFS payments and SNC grant reimbursements. Resulting Member Agency funding allocations and resulting assessment amounts are shown in Table 3.

The budget is organized into the Authority's two primary revenue sources, Member funding and non-Member funding (grant and USFS funding). The Authority's work activities planned for FY 2022 are summarized below.

For the Member-funded* portion of the proposed FY2022 budget the following activities and associated funding requirements are assumed:

- 1) Reduce the funding level for Board and Authority administration by \$8,000 (to \$112,000). This budget funds the Executive Officer and Administrative Officer positions and the Woodard & Curran contract for website technical support. Website technical support expenses were lower in recent years than budgeted and this reduction is reflected in this FY2022 budget proposal.

2) Maintain (unchanged) the annual funding support for the local school watershed education program at \$16,500.

3) Maintain (unchanged) at \$100,000 the funding level for costs associated with the forest health program, including supplemental funds for UMRWA's Forest Projects Plan.

4) Maintain (unchanged) at \$25,000 the funding for IRWM-related tasks requiring Member funding (e.g., possible Prop 1 Implementation Grant application).

For the non-Member funded portions of the budget, grant and other funding associated with SNC, NFWF and USFS sources for FY 2022 will be determined in September, the final month of UMRWA's fiscal year. Awarded but uncollected FY 2021 funds will be carried forward to FY 2022. Those amounts will be determined based on the September 30, 2021 end of fiscal year Treasurer's Report.

Table 1 – PROPOSED FY 2022 BUDGET

Programs	Categories	Member Funds	Other Funds (DWR, USFS, SNC)	Total Member Funded Program Budgets
Board and Authority Admin.	Executive Officer	50,000		112,000
	Administrative Officer	50,000		
	Web technical support	12,000		
Watershed Ed.	Public schools program (STE)	16,500		16,500
Forest Health	Cabbage Patch Project	--	Carry forward	100,000
	Black Springs	--	Carry forward	
	NFWF Culverts Project	--	Carry forward	
	West Calaveras Thin	--	Carry Forward	
	Forest Projects Plan	50,000		
	Forest-related Grant Applications	40,000		
	Inter-agency liaison & Board support	10,000		
IRWM	Grant applications	25,000		25,000
Grant Pass-through	West Point Water Reliability Project	0	\$527,287	0
	UMRWA administration	0	\$29,160	
TOTAL BUDGET		\$253,500	Carry forward	\$253,500

Carry forward amounts to be determined based on amount of Other Funds received vs. pending as of Sept. 30, 2021

Table 2 – FY 2022 MEMBER AGENCY FUNDING OFFSETS

Member assessments	As required by the above Proposed Fiscal Year Budget	\$253,500
Off budget <i>In-kind</i> contributions*	Authority Legal Counsel \$6,500 (Amador County) Accounting (\$25,725), annual audit (\$5,240) and Authority Secretary (\$11,760) (EBMUD)	\$49,225*
	TOTAL MEMBER SUPPORTED BUDGET =	\$302,725
Indirect Fee/ Overhead revenues	SNC, USFS and NFWF grant indirect receipts	(\$15,000)
	TOTAL REQUIRED MEMBER FUNDING =	\$287,725

* In-kind labor costs are Member-provided estimates of prior year work performed in support of UMRWA.

Table 3 – FY 2022 MEMBER FUNDING ALLOCATIONS & ASSESSMENTS

Formula % Share	Member Agency %	Proposed FY22 Allocation	In-Kind Credit	Proposed FY 2022 Assessment	Actual FY 2021 Assessment
Amador Entities 20%	Amador County – 9.2%	26,470	(6,500)	19,970	12,610
	Amador Water Agency – 9.2%	26,470	0	26,470	19,110
	Jackson Valley ID – 1.6%	4,604	0	4,604	3,324
Calaveras Entities 20%	Calaveras County – 6.0%	17,264	0	17,264	12,464
	Calaveras County WD – 9.6%	27,622	0	27,622	19,942
	Calaveras PUD – 4.4%	12,660	0	12,660	9,140
EBMUD	EBMUD – 60%	172,635	(42,725)	129,910	81,910
TOTAL		\$287,725	\$49,225	\$238,500	\$158,500



Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority

Agenda No: **6**

Meeting Date: July 23, 2021

Title:

Legislative Issues Update

Recommended Action:

For discussion and possible action – legislative matters discussed by the Board.

Summary:

Per the Board's April 23rd direction staff submitted letters of support on behalf of UMRWA to the authors of AB 697, AB 1570 and SB 804.

An additional budget bill of interest has been identified. SB 129, which provides \$1.95 million for operations and \$400,000 for repairs at the Pine Grove Youth Conservation Camp. UMRWA previously requested that the administration keep the Camp open. This funding would ensure the camp's continued operation.

At the federal level, on May 26, 2021 Senators Dianne Feinstein and Alex Padilla (Calif.), Senator Ron Wyden (Ore.) and Congressman Jimmy Panetta introduced the Wildfire Emergency Act, a bill with the goal of reducing catastrophic wildfires in the West. A summary of the three primary provisions of the bill follows:

1. Forest restoration projects

The bill authorizes \$250 million to fund a new U.S. Forest Service program to conduct large-scale forest restoration projects. Currently, forest restoration projects are often narrowly focused, a few hundred to a few thousand acres. By funding up to 20 projects that are at least 100,000 acres each, the Forest Service will be able to conduct landscape-scale projects, providing the ability to analyze and implement restoration activities on a far larger scale than in the past.

These forest restoration projects, designed to reduce the potential for wildfires, include removing dead and dying trees, using controlled burns to reduce fuel for larger fires, clearing out invasive and non-native species and creating habitat better suited for wildlife and native species. The federal cost-share of each project is not to exceed 60 percent, which will require partnerships with state, local, water district and private funding sources. The projects must be consistent with all environmental laws; protect large, older trees; reflect the best science on restoring forests; and take climate change into account when planning actions.

2. Critical infrastructure and energy flexibility

One successful method of preventing large wildfires is temporarily cutting power during times of very high wind. Unfortunately, the effects are often extremely disruptive. The bill

authorizes \$100 million for a new grant program to protect critical infrastructure and allow for greater energy flexibility.

The grant program will help retrofit key structures like hospitals and police, fire and utility stations so they can function better without grid power. Funds can also be used to expand the use of distributed energy systems, including microgrids, which will reduce the area that power shutoffs affect.

The bill also expands the Energy Department's weatherization program so that homes can be retrofitted to make them more resilient to wildfire through the use of fire-resistant building materials and other methods. Additionally, the bill will expedite the permitting process for installation of wildfire detection equipment, expand the use of satellite data to assist wildfire response and allow FEMA hazard mitigation funding to be used for the installation of fire-resistant wires and the undergrounding of wires.

3. Research, training and disadvantaged communities

The bill establishes one or more Prescribed Fire Centers to coordinate research and training of foresters and forest managers in western states in the latest methods and innovations in controlled burns, a key strategy in reducing the likelihood of catastrophic fires and improving the health of forests.

A new workforce development program will be authorized to assist in developing a career-training pipeline for forestry and fire management workers and establish a training center to teach foresters and fire managers in the latest methods and innovations in practices to reduce the likelihood of catastrophic fires and improve the health of forests.

An additional \$50 million is authorized to help disadvantaged communities plan and collaborate on forest restoration, wildland-urban interface and tribal projects as well as projects increasing equitable access to environmental education and volunteer opportunities.