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Assembly California Legislature



TOM LACKEY
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JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

February 13, 2019
Assemblymember Rudy Salas, Chair
Joint Legislative Audit Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 104
Sacramento, CA 95814

FEB 13 2019

Dear Chairman Salas,

This letter is to request that the Joint Legislative Audit Committee (JLAC) authorize an audit of the emergency plans of selected California counties that are susceptible to natural disasters; specifically the plans relating to the safe and efficient evacuation of elderly and disabled residents.

AB 2311 (2016) required each county to integrate access and functional needs into its emergency plan, upon the plan's next update. Local Hazard mitigation plans are updated every 5 years and tied to federal funding. SB 1035 (2018) requires local governments to update their safety elements to identify new information on fire hazards, flood hazards, and climate adaptation and resiliency strategies applicable to the city or county that was not available during the previous revision of the safety element. This revision is required to occur upon each revision of the housing element or Local Hazard Mitigation plan, but not less than every eight years.

Of the 85 people who lost their lives in the Camp Fire, at least 8 were elderly or disabled. Sixty-three-year old Ernest Foss couldn't walk without assistance. Vinnie Carota, 65, was missing a leg and had no way of escaping the surrounding flames. Evelyn Cline, 83, had no way to get into her car without help. Dorothy Herrera, 93, had onset dementia and her husband Louis, 86, couldn't drive anymore. With natural disasters on the rise, select counties are forced to carry out their emergency plans at a highly intensified rate. This procedure is meant to enhance the safety of the community and those that may have more difficulty escaping and this audit can help ensure that safety.

I respectfully ask that the Joint Legislative Audit Committee approve an audit to include the following determinations:

1. What lessons have been learned from recent wildfires?
2. Are counties adequately incorporating these lessons into their emergency plans?
3. Are counties following best practices to assist vulnerable populations during a natural disaster?
4. Have they taken the necessary measures to ensure that the elderly and disabled are accounted for in an emergency?
5. Are emergency plans updated frequently enough in order to evacuate people in a safe and efficient manner?

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6. What resources or programs are available to the elderly and disabled communities after evacuation?
7. How many elderly and disabled lose their life to a natural disaster?
8. What deficiencies in county emergency plans should be addressed to prevent loss of life for these populations?
9. What policy recommendations do the counties have in order to create the safest emergency plan?

It is critical that the elderly and disabled are cared for and feel safe in the event of a natural disaster, and this audit will shed light on the safety procedures of some of the most vulnerable counties.

Sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

Assemblyman Tom Lackey

36th District

Assemblyman James Gallagher

3rd District

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Should you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Hallie Balch (916)-319-2036 or at hallie.balch@asm.ca.gov.