



HOWARD COUNTY NATURAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN 2026 ANNUAL REPORT

Office of Emergency Management

Summary

This document provides the status for each of the hazard mitigation actions that were in the original 2024-2029 Hazard Mitigation Plan that was approved and adopted by County Council in November of 2023. It also includes updates from the 2026 annual review. Two action items were completed, three were modified, and three action items were canceled as of this 2026 annual review.

For questions, please email Lauren Chilton with OEM at lchilton@howardcountymd.gov.

Acronyms for Lead Agencies

Acronym	Agency
DFRS	Department of Fire and Rescue Services
DGS	Department of General Services
DILP	Department of Inspections, Licenses, and Permits
DPW BoE	Department of Public Works- Bureau of Engineering
DPW BoES	Department of Public Works- Bureau of Environmental Services
DPW BoH	Department of Public Works- Bureau of Highways
DPW BoU	Department of Public Works- Bureau of Utilities
DPW SWMD	Department of Public Works- Stormwater Management Division
DPZ	Department of Planning and Zoning
DRP	Department of Recreation and Parks
DTCS	Department of Technology and Communication Services
EDA	Economic Development Authority
HCHD	Howard County Health Department
OCS	Office of Community Sustainability
OEM	Office of Emergency Management
Office of Ag	Office of Agriculture
OoT	Office of Transportation
PIO	Office of Public Information
Risk	Risk Management Office

Links to Plans:

- [2024-2029 Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan](#) that was approved and adopted by County Council in November of 2023 ([CR169-2023](#)).
 - [2024-2029 Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan with updates from 2024 Annual Review](#)
 - [2024-2029 Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan with updates from 2025 Annual Review](#)
- [2024-2029 Flood Mitigation Plan](#)

*Highlighted text in the table below indicates language that was modified since the previous annual report.

**Please note that the funding sources listed in the table below will be utilized as available.

Action ID	Project Description	Status	Lead Agency	Funding Source	Estimated Cost	Year Added/Completed	Timeline	Mitigation Category
1	Continue to train and exercise FEMA's Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) to ensure readiness for use for imminent, life-threatening emergencies as necessary.	Ongoing	OEM	County Funds	Staff Time	2018	Long-term	Public Education & Outreach
2	Continue to educate homeowners on the potential risk of earthquakes and on safety techniques to follow during and after an earthquake.	Ongoing	OEM	County Funds	Staff Time	2018	Long-term	Public Education & Outreach
3	If prior warning is given, alert BGE of anticipated space weather and check to see if BGE is taking mitigative steps.	Ongoing	OEM	County Funds	Staff Time	2024	Long-term	Preventive Measures
4	Replicate Historic EC Outdoor Tone Alert System online resources to printed materials for residents and businesses owners.	In Progress	OEM	County Funds; EMPG	\$5k-\$10k for Printing	2024	Short-term	Public Education & Outreach
5	Continue to enhance and develop mutual aid agreements and/or relationships with local partners/non-governmental organizations.	Modified	OEM	County Funds	Staff Time	2018; Modified in 2026	Long-term	Emergency Services

Action ID	Project Description	Status	Lead Agency	Funding Source	Estimated Cost	Year Added/Completed	Timeline	Mitigation Category
6	Continue to update as needed and enforce Title 3-Buildings and Title 16-Planning, Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, Article II_Design Standards and Requirements, and Subtitle 7-Floodplain: namely Section 3114 Floodplain, which defines building codes in and adjacent to floodplains; Section 16.115, which protects streams, wetlands, and steep slopes from future development; and all of Subtitle 7, which defines the County's authority and all other regulations related to floodplains.	In Progress	DPW SWMD, DILP, DPZ	County Funds	Staff Time	2018 (Carried Over from Flood Mitigation Plan)	Long-term	Preventive Measures
7	Promote Wildfire Awareness Month in May through social media and outreach.	Ongoing	DFRS/OEM	County Funds	Staff Time	2024	Long-term	Public Education & Outreach
8	Conduct earthquake awareness outreach during Earthquake Awareness Month in February.	Ongoing	OEM	County Funds	Staff Time	2024	Long-term	Public Education & Outreach
9	Continue to update, maintain, and implement existing emergency plans and standard operations procedures, including but	Ongoing	OEM	EMPG; UASI; County Funds	Staff Time	2018	Long-term	Emergency Services

Action ID	Project Description	Status	Lead Agency	Funding Source	Estimated Cost	Year Added/Completed	Timeline	Mitigation Category
	not limited to, recovery, response, and/or emergency operations plans.							
10	Integrate relevant flood mitigation considerations from other studies into the overall County flood mitigation strategy as applicable.	In Progress	DPW SWMD, OEM	County Funds	Staff Time	2018 (Carried Over from Flood Mitigation Plan)	Long-term	Preventive Measures
11	Evaluate each County department's ability to maintain a suitable workforce during a protracted disaster.	Ongoing	OEM	County Funds	Staff Time	2018	Long-term	Emergency Services
12	Conduct emergency preparedness outreach prior to and during the Mid-Atlantic hurricane season.	Ongoing	OEM	County Funds; EMPG	Staff Time	2024	Long-term	Public Education & Outreach
13	Explore outreach options for people who live in structures that are at higher risk of being devastated by tornadoes.	Ongoing	OEM	County Funds; EMPG	Staff Time	2024	Short-term	Public Education & Outreach
14	Continue to conduct outreach to school-aged children and their families on various hazards that could threaten the County and provide informational packets on the County's natural and human-caused hazards.	Modified	OEM	County Funds; EMPG; UASI	Staff Time	2018; Modified in 2026	Long-term	Public Education & Outreach

Action ID	Project Description	Status	Lead Agency	Funding Source	Estimated Cost	Year Added/Completed	Timeline	Mitigation Category
15	Establish a pre-EMAC personnel and equipment identification process to deploy County personnel and equipment to surrounding jurisdictions and/or regional/national disaster events.	In Progress	OEM	County Funds; UASI; EMPG	Staff Time	2018	Short-term	Emergency Services
16	Increase public awareness on wildfires by providing outreach and education on urban/wildland interface and increasing buffers and defensible spaces to reduce vulnerability.	Ongoing	DFRS	EMPG	\$10k	2018	Long-term	Property Protection
17	Continue to work on issues related to floodplain identification and mapping risk; responsible floodplain management; and flood insurance. Continue to ensure compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program.	Ongoing	DPW SWMD, DPZ, DILP	County Funds	Staff Time	2018 (Carried Over from Flood Mitigation Plan)	Long-term	Preventive Measures
18	Continue to conduct training exercises for hazard events at least twice a year.	Ongoing	OEM	County Funds; EMPG	Staff Time	2018	Long-term	Emergency Services
19	Review and reevaluate the existing codes for County retaining walls.	Ongoing	DILP	County Funds	Staff Time	2018 (Carried Over from Flood Mitigation Plan)	Long-term	Structural Projects
20	Continue to conduct an annual snow emergency coordination meeting in the	Ongoing	DPW BoH	County Funds	Staff Time	2018	Long-term	Emergency Services

Action ID	Project Description	Status	Lead Agency	Funding Source	Estimated Cost	Year Added/Completed	Timeline	Mitigation Category
	fall with the County departments involved in snow emergency response.							
21	Finish Debris Management Plan and document lessons learned from recent events.	In Progress	OEM, DPW BoES	County Funds	Staff Time	2023	Short-term	Emergency Services
22	Continue to promote residential weatherization programs to protect households against climate change impacts such as extreme temperature.	Ongoing	OCS	County Funds	\$100k	2024	Long-term	Public Education & Outreach
23	Continue regular maintenance program for the County's emergency generators that includes a schedule to change filters, etc.	Ongoing	DGS	County Funds	Staff Time	2018	Long-term	Emergency Services
24	When updating the County's area plans and comprehensive plan, include hazard mitigation considerations to reduce risk to natural hazards throughout the County.	Ongoing	DPZ	County Funds	Staff Time	2018	Long-term	Preventive Measures
25	Continue to monitor and remove significant debris blockages to minimize debris accumulation within the County-owned stream channels. A part of Safe and Sound Program and debris management plan.	Ongoing	DPW BoES, DPW BoH, OEM	County Funds	Staff Time	2018 (Carried Over from Flood Mitigation Plan)	Long-term	Preventive Measures

Action ID	Project Description	Status	Lead Agency	Funding Source	Estimated Cost	Year Added/Completed	Timeline	Mitigation Category
26	Notify the public when the County conducts sampling and analysis of public drinking water to raise awareness for private property owners who have private wells and who may wish to test and analyze their drinking water. Health Department is limited to well water testing in areas exposed to flooding.	Ongoing	DPW BoU, HCHD, PIO	County Funds	Staff Time; Water Sampling Costs	2018 (Carried Over from Flood Mitigation Plan)	Long-term	Public Education & Outreach
27	Implement a Lightning Safety Awareness Week or Month in Howard County.	In Progress	PIO, OEM, DRP	County Funds	Staff Time	2024	Long-term	Public Education & Outreach
28	Encourage local businesses and local industry owners to develop a business continuity plan and provide educational materials.	Ongoing	OEM	County Funds; EMPG	Staff Time	2018	Long-term	Public Education & Outreach
29	Continue to adopt the most updated version of the National Electrical Code (NEC).	Ongoing	DILP	County Funds	Staff Time	2018	Long-term	Preventive Measures
30	Update the County floodplain ordinance to comply with the Model Floodplain Management Ordinance prepared by MDE.	In Progress	DPW SWMD	County Funds	Staff Time	2018 (Carried Over from Flood Mitigation Plan)	Long-term	Preventive Measures
31		Ongoing	DILP, DPZ		Staff Time	2018		

Action ID	Project Description	Status	Lead Agency	Funding Source	Estimated Cost	Year Added/Completed	Timeline	Mitigation Category
	Ensure that applicable codes and ordinances, such as building codes, floodplain ordinances, wetland protection, and erosion and sediment control standards are consistently enforced.			County Funds			Long-term	Preventive Measures
32	Continue to educate key emergency management stakeholders (Executive Cabinet and Emergency Management Operations Group members) by conducting trainings and exercises.	Ongoing	OEM	UASI; EMPG; County Funds	Staff Time/\$50k estimated for contracted training	2018	Long-term	Emergency Services
33	Ensure reconstruction activities are compliant with NFIP substantial damage/improvement requirements and existing codes.	Ongoing	DILP	County Funds	Staff Time	2018 (Carried Over from Flood Mitigation Plan)	Long-term	Preventive Measures
34	Provide Departments with resources about workplace safety, evacuations, appropriate assembly areas and shelter-in-place guidelines.	Ongoing	Risk Management	County Funds	Staff Time	2024	Long-term	Emergency Services
35	Continue to update as needed and enforce the incorporation of State and local storm water management regulations	Ongoing	DPZ	County Funds	Staff Time; Water Sampling Costs	2018 (Carried Over from Flood Mitigation Plan)	Long-term	Preventive Measures

Action ID	Project Description	Status	Lead Agency	Funding Source	Estimated Cost	Year Added/Completed	Timeline	Mitigation Category
	and progressive techniques into all development plans.							
36	Continue to encourage tree plantings, especially in urban and developed areas.	Ongoing	OCS, DRP	County Funds; Mid-Atlantic Community Forestry Fund	Staff Time	2024	Long-term	Public Education & Outreach
37	Explore increasing community center capacity to serve as a resiliency hub during extreme temperature events and after natural disasters.	In Progress	OCS, OEM	MEA Resilient Maryland Program; County Funds	\$500k+	2024	Long-term	Preventive Measures
38	Work with County departments and strategic partners to better serve at-risk populations (older adults, unhoused populations, non-English speaking populations, persons with access and functional needs) through effective public outreach on various hazards and monitor for gaps in providing emergency services to those populations.	Ongoing	OEM	County Funds; EMPG	Staff Time	2018, text edited in 2023	Long-term	Public Education & Outreach
39	Continue to maintain and update an annual plan to supplement Public Work's snow removal teams with Department of Recreation	Ongoing	DPW BoH	County Funds	Staff Time	2018	Long-term	Emergency Services

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	and Parks and Fire Department personnel.							
40	Conduct continuous training/exercises for operational response readiness to enhance interagency collaboration and communication in an incident.	Ongoing	OEM	County Funds; UASI; EMPG	Staff Time	2018, text edited in 2024	Long-term	Emergency Services
41	Conduct sampling and analysis according to the Bureau of Utilities Water Supply Emergency standard procedures after major flood events.	Ongoing	DPW BoU, HCHD	County Funds	Staff Time; Water Sampling Costs	2018 (Carried Over from Flood Mitigation Plan)	Long-term	Public Education & Outreach
42	Continue to host annual workshops for local builders to discuss how to build homes that are more resistant to natural hazards.	Ongoing	DILP	County Funds	Staff Time	2018	Long-term	Property Protection
43	Evaluate the new FEMA floodplain, including non-structure hazards within 100 feet of the flood zone on an as needed basis.	Ongoing	DPW SWMD	County Funds	Staff Time	2018 (Carried Over from Flood Mitigation Plan)	Short-term	Preventive Measures
44	Perform structural inspection of County-owned flood/channel walls after a major flood inundation event to determine if the structural integrity of any wall may be compromised and recommend repairs as	Ongoing	DPW BoE, DPW SWMD	County Funds; Grant and non-grant options	Staff Time	2018 (Carried Over from Flood Mitigation Plan)	Long-term	Structural Projects

Action ID	Project Description	Status	Lead Agency	Funding Source	Estimated Cost	Year Added/Completed	Timeline	Mitigation Category
	needed to reduce the chances of wall failure.							
45	Inventory existing culverts that are maintained by the Department of Public Works, Bureau of Highways and create an addressable GIS layer.	Ongoing	DPW BoH, DPW BoE	County Funds	Staff Time	2018 (Carried Over from Flood Mitigation Plan)	Long-term	Structural Projects
46	Continue to perform routine maintenance to keep street trees healthy so they are less likely to fall or break during a severe weather event.	Ongoing	DPW BoH	County Funds	Staff Time	2018	Long-term	Natural Resources
47	Assess all County-owned stream retaining walls to see if they need to be reinforced and prioritize that work.	Ongoing	DPW SWMD, DPW BoE	County Funds	Staff Time	2018 (Carried Over from Flood Mitigation Plan)	Long-term	Structural Projects
48	Continue to encourage implementation and maintenance of best management practices and native tree and shrub plantings on residential, nonprofit, and commercial properties to improve water quality and reduce stormwater impacts. Explore projects to address water quantity.	Ongoing	OCS	County Funds	Staff Time	2024	Long-term	Public Education & Outreach
49	Identify and pursue incentives to mitigate private and public properties	Ongoing	DPW SWMD, DPZ, DILP	County Funds; FEMA	Staff Time	2018 (Carried Over from Flood Mitigation Plan)	Long-term	Property Protection

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	from flood hazards through the following techniques: elevation, acquisition/demolition, and dry/wet floodproofing.			Grants; Resilient Maryland Revolving Loan				
50	Coordinate with Howard Soil Conservation District and the agricultural community on actions they can take to mitigate the effects of climate change.	Ongoing	Office of Ag, EDA	County Funds	Staff Time	2024	Long-term	Public Education & Outreach
51	Explore additional AI-based weather prediction software.	In Progress	OEM	County Funds; Future Budget Request; Non EM Grants	\$90k-\$100k	2024	Short-term	Preventive Measures
52	Sign up for CISA's Telecommunications Service Priority (TSP) for repair and installation of the County's critical voice and data circuits after a space weather event.	Not Started	OEM	County Funds	\$0	2024	Long-term	Preventive Measures
53	Work with the agricultural community to promote growing crops that are more drought-resistant.	Ongoing	Office of Ag	County Funds	Staff Time	2024	Long-term	Public Education & Outreach
54	Continue to explore the use of cool surface technologies including light/green roofs in heat vulnerable locations.	In Progress	OCS	County Funds	Staff Time	2024	Long-term	Structural Projects

Action ID	Project Description	Status	Lead Agency	Funding Source	Estimated Cost	Year Added/Completed	Timeline	Mitigation Category
55	Continue to administer the Forest Mitigation Program to establish new forests in parkland and along streams and rivers, to protect against erosion and uprooting of trees.	Ongoing	DRP	Developer Fee in Lieu Forest Fund	\$250,000	2018 (Carried Over from Flood Mitigation Plan)	Long-term	Natural Resources
56	Assess the use of environmental site design projects to increase stormwater capacity and public education.	Ongoing	OCS, DPW SWMD, DPZ, DRP	County Funds	Staff Time	2018	Long-term	Public Education & Outreach; Structural Projects
57	Implement natural resource preservation and land use planning initiatives that ensure natural resource areas that provide hazard mitigation benefits remain open spaces to retain the natural benefits they provide.	Ongoing	DPZ, OCS	County Funds	Staff Time	2018, text edited in 2024	Long-term	Natural Resources
58	Participate in the Great Southeast Shakeout Earthquake Drill every October.	Ongoing	OEM	County Funds	Staff Time	2024	Long-term	Public Education & Outreach
59	Utilize tracking reports during the annual NHMP review process to identify potential barriers or hindrances to implementation of hazard	Ongoing	OEM	County Funds; EMPG	Staff Time	2018	Long-term	Preventive Measures

Action ID	Project Description	Status	Lead Agency	Funding Source	Estimated Cost	Year Added/Completed	Timeline	Mitigation Category
	mitigation activities and projects.							
60	Maintain requirements to continue recognition as a Storm Ready Community (by the National Weather Service StormReady® Program).	Ongoing	OEM	County Funds	Staff Time	2018	Long-term	Emergency Services
61	Establish pre-disaster debris contracts and craft debris site MOUs with appropriate County agencies and regions.	Ongoing	DPW BoES	County Funds	Staff Time	2018	Short-term	Emergency Services
62	Assess all stormwater infrastructure for ability to meet standards associated with expected increase in intensities and frequencies of storms associated with climate change.	Ongoing	DPW SWMD	County Funds	Staff Time	2024	Long-term	Preventive Measures
63	Maintain the tree and brush trimming program within the right-of-way to protect access to critical facilities and to prevent emergency services from being disrupted due to falling trees or branches, before and/or after a hazard event.	Ongoing	DPW BoH	County Funds	Staff and Requirements contractors time	2018	Long-term	Emergency Services
64	Considering the impacts of climate change, evaluate infrastructure on frequently flooded roadways to	Ongoing	DPW SWMD, DPW BoE	County Funds	Staff Time for County roads; County	2018, text edited in 2023	Long-term	Structural Projects

Action ID	Project Description	Status	Lead Agency	Funding Source	Estimated Cost	Year Added/Completed	Timeline	Mitigation Category
	determine whether the roads, bridges, and culverts need to be upgraded to lessen the frequency of flooding. Prioritize projects and seek funding.				conveying information to SHA for State roads			
65	Continue installing and maintaining public shade structures to include RTA Bus Stop Facilities and public water features throughout the County.	Ongoing	DRP, OoT	County Funds; Maryland Program Open Space Grants	Staff Time	2024	Short-term	Structural Projects
66	Meet with subject matter experts and stakeholders to further develop recommendations for drought mitigation.	Not Started	OEM	County Funds; RCPGP Grant	Staff Time	2024	Short-term	Preventive Measures
67	Continue to evaluate and remove trees throughout the County's park system that are at risk of falling during storms and high wind events.	Ongoing	DRP	County Funds	\$500k	2018	Long-term	Natural Resources
68	Assess current Category IV County buildings for latest code compliance and make recommendations for facility improvements/replacements to County administration.	Modified	DGS	County Funds	Staff Time	2018; Modified in 2026	Short-term	Emergency Services
69	When beaver dams are identified and located, continue to monitor the	Ongoing	DRP	County Funds	\$2,000	2018	Long-term	Natural Resources

Action ID	Project Description	Status	Lead Agency	Funding Source	Estimated Cost	Year Added/Completed	Timeline	Mitigation Category
	dams. Dismantle dams if they pose a flooding threat.							
70	Perform flood mitigation for Historic Ellicott City, consistent with the Ellicott City Safe and Sound Flood Mitigation Plan, by designing and constructing the North Tunnel, Maryland Avenue Culvert, Pond H-7, Pond H-4, Quaker Mill Pond, Pond NC-3, Pond T-1, and arm barrier system, as well as performing other non-capital project efforts consistent with the Safe and Sound Plan.	In Progress	DPW SWMD	County Funds; FMP Grant; MD Revolving Loan Fund; FMA Grant; BRIC Grant; Local Bond Initiative	\$200M	2023; text modified in 2025	Medium-term	Structural Projects
71	Implement a comprehensive critical infrastructure protection program that focuses on security and consequence management.	In Progress	OEM	UASI; Capital Budget; County Funds	Staff Time	2023	Short-term and when needed	Preventive Measures
72	Continue to work with property owners to increase vegetation in riparian buffers through the Plant-It-Green program, which consists of supplying free trees to plant adjacent to the streams to reduce velocity of storm water and to stabilize soil.	Ongoing	DRP	County Funds	\$50k-100k	2018 (Carried Over from Flood Mitigation Plan)	Long-term	Public Education & Outreach

Action ID	Project Description	Status	Lead Agency	Funding Source	Estimated Cost	Year Added/Completed	Timeline	Mitigation Category
73	Assess, implement, and maintain stream restoration and bank stabilization techniques on County-controlled property to reduce bank erosion as needed.	Ongoing	DPW SWMD	County Funds	Staff Time	2018 (Carried Over from Flood Mitigation Plan)	Long-term	Natural Resources
74	Provide additional protections to historic sites, structures, and places from hazards to preserve their cultural and place-based significance to Howard County.	Ongoing	DPZ	County Funds/ State Grants	Staff Time	2024	Long-term	Preventive Measures
75	Take down dead ash, oak, and tree of heaven trees that could potentially fall and hit a target and replant new trees to reestablish the vegetation and new tree canopy.	Ongoing	DRP	County Funds	\$500k	2018, edited in 2023	Long-term	Natural Resources
76	Sequentially construct flood risk mitigation measures, such as temporary or permanent flood barriers, elevating or relocating equipment, and/or other flood risk mitigation facility improvements at the County's wastewater plant, the Little Patuxent Water Reclamation Plant.	In Progress	DPW BoE (Utility Design Division)	County Funds	\$46.6m	2023	Medium-term	Structural Projects

Action ID	Project Description	Status	Lead Agency	Funding Source	Estimated Cost	Year Added/Completed	Timeline	Mitigation Category
77	Implement the George Howard Government Campus microgrid to supply a resilient source of energy to critical services during prolonged outages. Consider exploring other opportunities to increase resilient energy sources.	In Progress	OCS, OEM	MDE loans/grants; BRIC Grant	\$15m	2024	Medium-term	Structural Projects
78	Sequentially rehabilitate/relocate water and sewer pipes/interceptors crossing streams and stabilize streams.	Ongoing	DPW BoE (Utility Design Division)	County Funds	\$10m	2025	Medium-term	Structural Projects
Completed Actions This Year								
A	Explore prescribed burning to reduce fuel loads in forests.	Completed	HCHD; DRP	County Funds	Staff Time	2024/2026	Long-term	Preventive Measures
B	Collect information and develop a query-able database of specific hazard events that caused any damages to County infrastructure and critical facilities.	Completed	OEM	County Funds	Staff Time	2018/2026	Medium-term	Emergency Services

Canceled Actions This Year

Action ID	Project Description	Status	Reason for Cancellation	Lead Agency	Funding Source	Estimated Cost	Year Added/ Canceled	Timeline	Mitigation Category
A	Continue to place NOAA Weather Alert Radios in new designated critical facilities and County-owned buildings.	Canceled	This initiative is being canceled due the use of existing communication modalities to be defined in the upcoming Emergency Action Plan Program, managed by Risk Management, and would therefore be redundant.	OEM	UASI; EMPG; County Funds	Staff Time; ~\$20 per radio	2018; Canceled in 2026	Long-term	Public Education & Outreach
B	Promote Firescaping for residents who live along the Wildland-Urban Interface.	Canceled	DFRS has advised that firescaping is not practical for or applicable to most Howard County residents. Therefore, the decision was made to remove this action item and instead focus on messaging for other fire prevention actions that residents can reasonably take.	DFRS	County Funds	Staff Time	2024; Canceled in 2026	Long-term	Public Education & Outreach

C	Build water main along U.S. Route 29.	Canceled	The hydraulic modeling was completed in April 2025, and the decision was made not to proceed with the project based on the model/study findings.	DPW BoE (Utility Design Division)	County Funds	\$30m	2018; edited in 2023; canceled in 2026	Medium-term	Natural Resources
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