



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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PRESS RELEASE

Date: January 13, 2020

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LOCAL EMERGENCY ROAD REPAIRS GRANTED EXTENSIONS

Following an extensive educational outreach campaign by the County and its partners, the Federal Highway Administration has agreed to reinstate time extensions allowing dozens of emergency winter storm road repair projects to move forward.

This time extensions mean that projects will remain eligible to receive federal Emergency Relief funds previously committed to roads impacted by 2017 winter storms, when the County sustained unprecedented damage to local road infrastructure. The County requested extensions for 84 projects eligible for \$42 million in FHWA funding.

"This is a victory for the residents of Santa Cruz County," Deputy County Administrative Officer and Public Works Director Matt Machado said. "We are grateful to our partners and especially members of our federal delegation, who worked extensively to assure that these projects move forward as soon as possible."

Winter storms in 2017 resulted in over \$140 million in damage to roads at over 200 sites throughout Santa Cruz County. While nearly 40 of these projects have been completed, extensive State and federal regulations such as procurement compliance, environmental review and permitting, right-of-way certification and more can necessitate time extensions in order to facilitate completion.

The FHWA time extensions will allow these projects to advance to construction with substantial federal funding. Crucial support for the extension was provided by U.S. Reps. Jimmy Panetta and Anna Eshoo, with support from County elected officials and staff.

"We are pleased that our advocacy was successful and look forward to getting back to work. The community has waited long enough to see these repairs completed," Supervisor Zach Friend said.

Of the projects eligible for funding under the time extension, five are currently under construction, approximately a dozen more projects will be under construction this spring and another 30 projects are expected to start construction within six months.