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*Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency*

**FEMA Approves Request for Assistance with Kohala Blaze  
Under Fire Management Assistance Grant Program**

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**HONOLULU** — The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on Tuesday, August 8, approved the State of Hawai'i's request for a disaster declaration to provide assistance with the wind-whipped Kohala Ranch wildfire on the Big Island.

The decision under the Fire Management Assistance Grant (FMAG) program opens the door to allow for federal reimbursement of up to 75% of the eligible firefighting costs.

The fire began early Tuesday and threatened about 200 homes in and around Kohala Ranch, a rural community near the northern tip of Hawai'i island with a total population of more than 500 people. The fire was also threatening a volunteer fire department, local electrical transmission lines, and an AT&T cellular communications tower in the area.

The fire had burned more than 600 acres of State and private land at the time the request was made, and was uncontained. High, gusty winds and dry conditions put much of Hawai'i under a Red Flag Warning that continues Wednesday, and two other uncontrolled fires were burning on the Big Island and Maui.

Firefighters in all three incidents have been hampered by the winds, which made it impossible to provide aircraft support for their efforts to contain the flames.

FEMA Region IX Administrator Robert J. Fenton Jr. determined that the Kohala Ranch fire threatened such destruction as would constitute a major disaster.

The Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA) coordinated the request for assistance and will work with FEMA to identify and track eligible costs.

“We’re grateful to our federal partners for their quick review and decision, which will help Hawai‘i County meet this challenge in Kohala,” said HI-EMA Administrator James Barros.

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