



March 6, 2026

The Honorable Jesse Gabriel, Chair
Assembly Committee on Budget
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable David Tangipa, Vice Chair
Assembly Committee on Budget
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable James Ramos, Chair
Assembly Committee on Budget
Subcommittee No. 6
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: FY 2026-27 Budget Request for the El Dorado County Regional Search and Rescue, Disaster Response, and Training Facility

Dear Chair Gabriel, Vice Chair Tangipa, and Chair Ramos,

I respectfully request \$7 million in one-time funding to support the development of a Regional Search and Rescue, Disaster Response, and Training Facility in El Dorado County. This facility will strengthen public safety, improve disaster response coordination, and enhance regional emergency preparedness for communities throughout the Sierra Nevada and surrounding counties.

El Dorado County faces unique public safety challenges due to its geography, visitor volume, and exposure to natural disasters. The county includes the South Lake Tahoe basin—an internationally recognized recreation destination that draws visitors year-round to alpine terrain and remote wilderness areas. These conditions contribute to a high volume of search and rescue incidents requiring specialized training, rapid deployment, and coordinated emergency response capabilities.

The El Dorado County Search and Rescue team is composed of more than 140 trained volunteers and has conducted over 250 search and rescue missions in the past three years, including 22 out-of-county mutual aid responses across California. In that same period, the team has logged more than 3,700 training hours, demonstrating the scale of operational demand and the need for a dedicated regional training facility.

The region's emergency response needs extend beyond search and rescue operations. El Dorado County has experienced multiple major wildfire events in recent years, including the Caldor Fire, Mosquito Fire, and Crozier Fire, which required large-scale evacuations and extensive mutual aid coordination. During the Caldor Fire alone, more than 50,000 residents were under evacuation orders, and over 120 law enforcement officers per day were required to support incident management operations. Additionally, county personnel deployed statewide to bay area and southern counties for mutual aid. These events highlight the need for a centralized training and disaster coordination facility capable of supporting multi-agency responses.

The proposed project will establish a solar-powered training and operations complex designed to support emergency response operations across the region. The facility will include a 120-foot by 50-foot disaster operations and training center capable of hosting multi-agency training exercises and incident briefings for 200 to 250 personnel, as well as a secondary operations building dedicated to search and rescue operations, equipment staging, and emergency planning functions.

Supporting infrastructure will include a large emergency vehicle staging area capable of functioning as a helicopter landing zone, a training tower for aviation hoist and rescue training, secure equipment storage, and operational space for marine, aviation, and explosive ordinance disposal training teams. The facility will also serve as a disaster coordination hub and reunification center during major incidents such as wildfires, school evacuations, or other emergencies.

This investment will deliver significant statewide benefits by strengthening California's mutual aid system, improving wildfire response coordination, and expanding training capacity for emergency personnel across multiple jurisdictions. The facility will support law enforcement agencies, fire departments, search and rescue teams, emergency services organizations, and community partners involved in disaster response operations.

Therefore, I respectfully request \$7 million in one-time General Fund support in the FY 2026–27 budget to develop the El Dorado County Regional Search and Rescue, Disaster Response, and Training Facility.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you require additional information or would like to discuss this proposal further, please contact Andrew Nickens in my office at (916) 319-2011.

Sincerely,



HEATHER HADWICK

Assemblymember, District 1