



DISASTER NEWS

Economic Injury Loans for Small Businesses

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SBA DISASTER LOANS AVAILABLE FOLLOWING SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE DISASTER DESIGNATION

BOSTON, MA– The U.S. Small Business Administration announced today that federal disaster loans are available to small, non-farm, agriculture-dependent businesses located in various counties in Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont.

“SBA’s disaster declaration was issued as a result of a similar action taken by the Secretary of Agriculture to help farmers in these states recover from losses caused by wet weather conditions that occurred from May 1 through October 31, 2003,” said SBA Disaster Area Director William E. Leggiero, Jr.

Under this declaration, SBA’s Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program is **available to small agriculture-dependent businesses and small agricultural cooperatives** that suffered economic injury as a direct result of the severe weather’s effect on agricultural producers. For example, a business that sells goods/services to agricultural producers may be unable to pay bills and/or meet expenses because of the reduced purchasing power of the farmers and ranchers.

“SBA is committed to helping small businesses overcome economic injuries and we offer the financial resources to accomplish this,” Leggiero added.

Eligible small businesses may qualify for loans up to \$1.5 million. These loans are available at a 2.953 percent interest rate with loan terms up to thirty years. SBA determines eligibility for the program based on the size and type of business and its financial resources.

Under this disaster declaration, SBA does not provide loans to agricultural producers, and cannot provide loans to non-agricultural dependent businesses. However, small businesses may contact their local SBA District office for information and other possible assistance. Farmers and ranchers should contact the Farm Services Agency, for information regarding additional loan programs.

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The declaration designates Berkshire, Bristol, Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire, Norfolk and Plymouth counties in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as the primary disaster area. The contiguous counties of Barnstable, Middlesex, Suffolk and Worcester in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; Hartford and Tolland in the State of Connecticut; Cheshire in the State of New Hampshire; Bristol, Newport and Providence in the State of Rhode Island; and Windham in the State of Vermont are also eligible to apply.

For more information and to obtain a loan application interested business owners should contact the SBA Disaster Area 1 Office at **1-800-659-2955** or **1-800-877-8339** for the hearing-impaired. Loan applications must be returned to SBA no later than November 9, 2004.

For more information visit SBA's website at www.sba.gov/disaster

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SBA Disaster Assistance Office/Area 1 - 360 Rainbow Blvd., South - Niagara Falls, NY 14303