

Wine Country fires show mutual aid inadequacies

By Joaquin Palomino and Kimberly Veklerov, San Francisco Chronicle

In the early hours of the most destructive firestorm in California history, officials in Napa and Sonoma counties knew their local first responders would be overwhelmed and turned to a statewide mutual-aid system designed to swiftly bring in support crews from other regions to protect homes and save lives.

They got help, but they didn't get what they asked for – not nearly.

Commanders in the two counties requested 305 fire engines through the state's mutual-aid program as the Tubbs Fire swept west from Calistoga to Santa Rosa and the Atlas Fire raced through the hills north of the city of Napa. But only 130 engines would be sent to those blazes over the first 12 hours, according to data obtained by The Chronicle under the state's Public Records Act.

Officials in Mendocino County, where nine people were killed by another big fire, requested 15 engines from outside the county. None was sent the first day.

[Read the whole story](#)