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Meet the Gold Rush Towns at Risk of Flooding From California Dam.

- Evacuation warnings in effect for Butte, Sutter, Yuba counties
- Communities have \$1.6 billion in municipal debt outstanding

The damage to the spillway of the Oroville Dam puts a spotlight on the northern California communities that once boomed during the Gold Rush and are now at risk of severe flooding.

Evacuation warnings remain in effect for Butte, Sutter and Yuba counties, meaning that residents who were allowed to return Tuesday after being ordered to leave on Sunday must be prepared to flee again if necessary.

Damage to an emergency spillway of the nation's tallest dam after weeks of rain had raised the risk of disastrous floods downstream, and repair crews are still working around the clock. Adding to the concern are new storms forecast for next week that could strain the reservoir behind the spillway.

The communities, which the state's current economic boom has largely passed by, have \$1.6 billion in outstanding municipal debt, data compiled by Bloomberg show. Some of their debt has already been repriced to higher yields, according to Bloomberg BVAL.

If the municipalities flood, President Donald Trump would likely sign an emergency declaration, authorizing the Federal Emergency Management Agency to act, said Eric Hoffmann, an analyst at Moody's Investors Service.

"The FEMA aid would supplement state and local expenses, alleviating immediate financial challenges and minimizing fiscal and credit pressures," Hoffmann said.

The following are details about each county:

Butte County:

Population: 225,411

Poverty rate: 21.4 percent

Total outstanding debt by all issuers in county: \$338 million

Biggest issuers: Chico Redevelopment Agency, \$73 million; Chico Unified School District, \$68 million

Sutter County:

Population: 96,463

Poverty rate: 17.5 percent

Total outstanding debt by all issuers in county: \$533 million

Biggest issuers: Yuba Levee Financing Authority, \$151 million; Sutter Union High School District, \$93 million

Yuba County:

Population: 74,492

Poverty rate: 21.6 percent

Total outstanding debt by all issuers in county: \$731 million

Biggest issuers: Yuba Community College District, \$373 million; Marysville Joint Unified School District, \$164 million

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by Romy Varghese

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