



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

LATE  
DIST

A-40

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors  
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 568-2240

2017 DEC 11 PM 2:58

Department Name: COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA  
CLERK OF THE  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS CEO and Human Resources

Department No.:  
For Agenda Of: December 12, 2017  
Placement: Administrative  
Estimated Time:  
Continued Item: No  
If Yes, date from:  
Vote Required: 4/5

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Department: Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer  
Director(s): Andreas Pyper, Assistant Director, Human Resources  
Contact Info: Andreas Pyper ext. 2812

**SUBJECT:** Actions to assist employees affected by the Thomas Fire

**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: Select\_Other

As to form: Select\_Concurrence

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Recommended Actions:**

That the Board of Supervisors consider recommendations regarding County employees affected by the Thomas Fire, as follows:

- a) Adopt a resolution:
  - (1) Granting, under section 27-12, subdivision (i) of the Santa Barbara County Code, eighty (80) hours of paid leave to employees whose homes were destroyed in the fire, and up to forty (40) hours of paid leave to other employees absent from work because of mandatory evacuation; and
  - (2) Authorizing Human Resources to purchase Ventura County Transportation Commission monthly bus passes and provide a monthly pass, free of charge, to employees lacking transportation to work because of the fire; and
- b) Find, pursuant to County Code § 27-12(i), that the above action is in the best interest of the County, and does not amount to a gift of public funds prohibited by the California Constitution, because it serves public purposes which include retaining qualified and competent public employees; and

- c) Receive information on other actions that staff is pursuing or implementing; and
- d) Determine, pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15378(b)(4), that the above action is a government fiscal activity which does not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment, and therefore is not a project subject to environmental review

**Summary Text:**

On December 4, 2017 the Thomas fire began in Ventura County and burned hundreds of homes and structures. The County of Santa Barbara employs 181 individuals who live in the City of Ventura and City of Santa Paula, which are areas severely impacted by the fire. Some of these employees were in evacuation areas and/or lost their homes in the fire. For those who have lost their homes, it is in the best interest of the County to provide time for them to address living situations and other needs as they recover from this tragedy. Santa Barbara County Code Section 27-12 (i) which states that *“The board of supervisors, by a four-fifths vote, may grant a leave of absence with pay, when it first expressly finds that leave of absence with pay is in the best interest of the county, and does not amount to a gift of public funds prohibited by the Constitution of the state.”* allows for the Board to grant this additional paid leave to employees. The 40-hour and 80-hour leave maximums described herein cannot be combined. These authorized paid leave hours are not eligible for cash payout or termination/retirement payout. Should an extension of this time period be necessary, we will return to your Board for approval.

As of filing of this letter it is confirmed that at least two (2) employees have lost their homes and that sixty-seven (67) employees have been subject to mandatory evacuation orders. The fire is still active and has moved from Ventura County into the boundaries of Santa Barbara County.

Some of the actions and recommendations that the Board is being informed of, and are being asked to approve, are modelled on similar actions taken by other local government entities such as Napa County, Ventura County, Marin County and Sonoma County during the traumatic fire incidents that happened there recently. Human Resources will determine who has been affected and will implement the benefits discussed in this Board letter, working with the appropriate departments.

**Background:**

Human Resources staff is pursuing extended or additional benefits to employees who have been impacted by the fire. Actions being pursued by HR include the following:

- Additional eighty (80) hours Leave of Absence with Pay: Human Resources and the CEO’s office believes that it is in the best interest of the County to provide time for *employees who have lost their homes* in the Thomas Fire to address their living situation and other needs. Based on similar actions by the local government entities in Northern California, Human Resources and the CEO’s office is recommending 80 hours of additional leave per affected employee.
- Up to forty (40) hours Leave of Absence with Pay: Authorizing up to a maximum of 40 hours of leave with pay for employees absent from work due to a *mandatory evacuation* of the Thomas fire (upon attestation that the absence was directly related to mandatory evacuation and approval by the agency/department head).

- Prescription refill-to-soon (RTS) Override: An override from the RTS restriction has been requested and approved from Blue Shield and Express Scripts to help streamline the process to refill prescriptions by employees who lost their medication in the fire, left it at home when they had to evacuate or whose prescription mail delivery is now undeliverable. Currently, the pharmacy system does not allow refills if done too soon after the last refill of the prescription. This override will allow employees to pay their normal co-pay regardless of when their last refill occurred. There is no cost to the County for this override.
- Virtual and Online Medical Consultation through Teladoc: This is an existing online doctor's consultation service currently available to all employees insured through Blue Shield. Given that some employees affected by the fire may not be able to see their normal physician immediately, employees may wish to use these consultation services. Teladoc has set up a special Hotline number that any employee, or their dependents, who live in the fire area, regardless if they are enrolled in County Health insurance or not, may call to receive free online or telephonic doctor's consultation. This service is ONLY available through the special Hotline number. When calling they just need to state they live in the fire area and provide the name of the fire. There is no additional cost to the County for this service.
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP):
  - Our EAP provider, Empathia Life Matters, will extend free in-person counseling sessions from 3 to 6 for those employees who live in the affected areas. The cost to the county would be \$100 per additional session. To manage these increased costs the additional sessions will be made available for a 90 day period from the date of Board approval.
  - All EAP call center staff have been placed on alert and will be available 24/7 for some period of time. HR has posted the link on the County's intranet site for employees to access.
  - Empathia will make onsite mental health counselors available in either Santa Barbara or Ventura at the appropriate time, most likely after the fire is under control and there is more clarity. The additional costs to the county could be the following:
    - On-site EAP Counselor for a set schedule and period of time, as determined by the County and Empathia, to provide one-on-one assessment, referral, and counseling services to employees as requested. \$150.00 per hour on-site time.
    - On-site Group Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) Services. These services are included in Empathia's program for the County, up to a per episode cap of \$5,000 in cost. An episode is a single event or group of concurrent related events. Cost is calculated based on Empathia's standard per hour charge for the provision of trauma response services and travel costs, as required. Empathia will notify the County in advance if it appears that costs for on-site CISD services may exceed the \$5,000 limit. Additional on-site CISD services will be billed at a per hour charge of \$250.00 per hour.
- VCTC Coastal Express Bus Service (Ventura County to/from Santa Barbara service)
  - Several employees either have lost their bus passes due to their home being destroyed, having left their bus passes at home when evacuating or directly being affected by the fire. To assist them the county will purchase, on a one-time basis, a monthly bus pass.

- o The cost is \$105 per monthly bus pass and the total amount is estimated to not exceed \$5,250. HR will be purchase these passes on an as-needed basis.

**Performance Measure:**

None

**Contract Renewals and Performance Outcomes:**

None

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

Budgeted: Select\_Budgeted

The estimated annual fiscal impact as a result of this action is unknown; however, any costs associated with approval of the recommended action would be absorbed within existing agency and department budgets. If additional appropriation should be necessary, the departments will prepare a Budget Revision Request.

**Fiscal Analysis:**

<u>Funding Sources</u>	<u>Current FY Cost:</u>	<u>Annualized On-going Cost:</u>	<u>Total One-Time Project Cost</u>
General Fund			
State			
Federal			
Fees			
Other:			
Total	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

Narrative:

**Key Contract Risks:**

None

**Staffing Impacts:**

**Legal Positions:**                      **FTEs:**

None

**Special Instructions:**

**Attachments:**

Attachment A: Resolution of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara

**Authored by:**

Mona Miyasato  
Andreas Pyper

**CC:**