




BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

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

Department Name: Fire/OEM
Department No.: 031
For Agenda Of: December 12, 2023
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Time
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Mark Hartwig, Fire Chief/Fire Warden 
Director(s)
Contact Info: Kelly Hubbard, Director of Emergency Management
SUBJECT: Termination of the Proclamation of Local Emergency Caused by the January 2023 Storm and Subsequent 2023 Winter Storms, Last Action October 17, 2023, All Supervisorial Districts

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: N/A

As to form: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Adopt a Resolution Terminating the Proclamation of Local Emergency caused by the January 2023 Storm and Subsequent 2023 Winter Storms in Santa Barbara County pursuant to Government Code Section 8630; and
- b) Receive an update on the Winter 2023 Storms and their impacts; and
- c) Determine that these actions are exempt from the provisions of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines sections 15061(b)(3) and 15269.

Summary Text:

This item is on the Board of Supervisor's Agenda in order to receive an update and to terminate the Proclamation of Local Emergency caused by the January 2023 Storm and Subsequent 2023 Winter Storms initially declared by the Director of Emergency Services on January 9, 2023 and ratified by the Board of Supervisors on January 10, 2023. The attached resolution and this board letter are updated to include additional winter storm incidents, Governor proclamations, and Federal declarations. These include the original storm event starting on January 4, 2023 through January 10, 2023, when an atmospheric river event impacted Santa Barbara County (County), as well as three additional significant storms that have

impacted the County and its Operational Area partners. These systems brought heavy rain and high winds that resulted in storm surge, flooding, landslides, debris flows, ground saturation, snow, and high flow releases from local reservoirs throughout the County.

The storms caused conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property within the County of Santa Barbara that have now subsided. These conditions are no longer beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment and facilities of the combined forces of Santa Barbara County Operational Area to combat. These conditions warranted and necessitated that the County proclaim the existence or threatened existence of a local emergency in order to utilize all resources necessary to respond to the damage that would likely be caused by the storms, and receive assistance from the State and Federal governments. Government Code Section 8630(c) requires the Board to review the need for the continued existence of the Proclamation of Local Emergency at least every 60 days. Further, Government Code Section 8630(d) requires termination of the Proclamation of Local Emergency at the earliest possible date that conditions warrant. Therefore, this action by the Board of Supervisors will fulfill this requirement.

Background:

The Director of Emergency Services issued a Proclamation of Local Emergency due to the conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property within the County of Santa Barbara, as evidenced by multiple weather advisories issued by the National Weather Service and the protective actions taken by the Sheriff's Office. Government Code Section 8630(a) allows the County, acting through the Board of Supervisors, to proclaim a local emergency. Section 8630(c) requires the Board to review the need for the continued existence of the Proclamation of Local Emergency at least every 60 days and Section 8630(d) requires termination of the Proclamation of Local Emergency at the earliest possible date that conditions warrant.

The proclamation was continued as the County worked to address concerns with the Santa Maria River, which was flowing outside of its historical river course, creating conditions of immediate and imminent threat from unusual flooding that could cause loss of life and significant damages to residents, farm land, private business, critical infrastructure, and public facilities within, and around, the disadvantaged City of Guadalupe and Guadalupe Dunes. Utilizing Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-10-23 to streamline levee repairs and debris removal and the County proclamation, County Public Works initiated multiple emergency contractors to conduct debris removal within the River. The completion of the debris removal and use of these materials to create a temporary non-structural bank to the river has provided temporary minimal protections to this area and may re-establish the river within its historical course. Further updates on these efforts will be provided through the County Public Works Department.

Response Efforts

Due to the ongoing storms throughout 2023 the County continued to respond to the impacts of significant rain, wind and snow that contributed to a continuous state of ground saturation, soils and land movement, flooding, expanding or worsening damages to infrastructure, and required releases of water from reservoirs. These conditions have contributed to expansive staffing and response needs, new and enhanced damages to public and private infrastructure, and continued coordination of the Operational Area. Response efforts included emergency protective measures, reverse notifications, road closures, infrastructure assessments and emergency repairs, sheltering, and unhoused outreach.

- Beginning on January 3, 2023, the National Weather Service (NWS) issued wind, coastal flood advisories, and surf advisories for various areas of the county through January 17, 2023.
- Starting on January 5, 2023, the National Weather Service issued multiple flood, flash flood and debris laden flooding advisories, watches and warnings throughout Santa Barbara County through January 14, 2023.
- The Alisal, Cave and Thomas Fire Storm Risk Decision Teams started meeting daily January 3-9, 2023 to receive updates from NWS, County Public Works, and various public safety agencies to determine community risk and recommend protective actions. These meetings quickly expanded to discuss countywide impacts and considerations.
- On January 4, 2023, the Governor of the State of California proclaimed a State of Emergency to exist throughout California.
- At the direction of public safety agencies, between January 3-15, 2023 the Office of Emergency Management issued multiple storm or safety advisories, evacuation warnings, evacuation orders and shelter-in-place orders for throughout the South Coast and unincorporated areas in north Santa Barbara County via emergency notification systems.
- Lake Cachuma's storage volume rose from being 35% full to 81% full within 48 hours due to the January 9 storm. Subsequent storms and runoff in January led to Lake Cachuma becoming 99% full by January 31, leading to continued coordination releases, notifications and protective actions.
- Between February 23 through March 2, 2023 the County experienced another series of storms, that included NWS notifications for Winter Weather, Wind, and Flood Advisories, as well as Tornado Warnings, Thunderstorms, Flash Flood Warnings, and Blizzards.
- On February 24, 2023 the County was notified that the Bradbury Dam was going to release significantly more water than expected due to heavy rains causing the potential risk of life-threatening downstream flooding.
- On March 9 and 10, 2023 the County was impacted by localized flooding and the need to coordinate releases from Twitchell Dam.
- Between March 13 through March 15, 2023 the county experienced another significant storm that included NWS notifications regarding the potential for high winds, flooding, river flooding and mudflows.
- County Public Works started debris removal within the Santa Maria River on September 11, 2023 with the support of County Fire. On September 12, 2023, the Board of Supervisors approved up to \$8 million towards Public Works efforts to clear vegetation and silt debris within the river. This effort removed roughly 1,000,000 cubic yards of debris and was completed on October 27, 2023. County Public Works will continue plant restoration installation through early 2024, and monitoring and reporting will likely continue for 5 years.
- County Public Works and OEM continue to coordinate with FEMA, CalOES, California Department of Water Resources, and the Army Corps of Engineers on temporary and long-term measures regarding how to protect the community, private business, and public infrastructure from the Santa Maria River.

Recovery Efforts

The County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) continues to coordinate post-disaster recovery efforts. Ongoing recovery efforts include emergency protective measures of critical infrastructure, restoration or repair of government infrastructure, coordination of resources for residential, business and agricultural partners, fiscal tracking of countywide efforts, and more. As recovery efforts continue, OEM

is preparing for the potential of future storms that may cause additional flooding, landslides and debris flows leading to more damage to homes, properties, businesses, local roadways and bridges.

FEMA Public Assistance (Government Reimbursement)

The County has been included in two presidential declarations at this time. The first is DR-4683-CA “California Severe Winter Storms, Flooding, Landslides, and Mudslides” for the period of December 27, 2022 to January 31, 2023, which includes all categories of FEMA public assistance (emergency protective measures, permanent work and mitigation). On February 28, 2023 the Board approved an agreement with Ernst and Young (E&Y) to support the County’s efforts in cost recovery associated with this event. Auditor Controller and CEO Budget staff are working together with E&Y to assist departments with their submittal processes.

On April 14, 2023, OEM facilitated the FEMA Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) with County Public Works, County Parks, Santa Maria Valley Water Conservation District, CalOES, and FEMA. The PDA process was in support of the County’s request for consideration to be included in FEMA major declaration DR-4699-CA (declared by the President on April 3, 2023) for the February and March storms. FEMA and CalOES staff conducted site visits of the largest dollar damage sites to verify damages, eligibility, and estimated costs.

On May 25, 2023, the presidential disaster declaration DR-4699-CA was amended to include Santa Barbara County to the “California Severe Winter Storms, Straight-line Winds, Flooding, Landslides, and Mudslides” incident for the period beginning February 21, 2023 through July 10, 2023. DR-4699-CA includes all categories of FEMA Public Assistance.

County Estimated Storm Costs (as of 8/11/23)

	Emergency Protective Measures (Categories A-B)	Permanent Work (Categories C-G)
January Storms (DR-4683)	\$33,797,165	\$49,542,096
February/March Storms (DR-4699)	\$19,389,960	\$16,843,000

Additionally, OEM along with CalOES is assisting all other government and non-profit organizations within the County including the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians with their Public Assistance processes. Damages to state properties and infrastructure is coordinated directly through the State. Los Padres National Forest is working with the Federal Highway Administration to pursue emergency funding to address storm damage to federal roads within the Forest.

Community Recovery Assistance

Many of the County’s residents, businesses, and agricultural businesses continue to suffer impacts from the original and ongoing storms. The following is a summary of known support efforts.

County Support:

- County/City Referral System

- A Smartsheet based system was developed for County Staff to refer residents to County or City support services based on identified damages and needs. This is primarily being utilized at the Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC), but will continue to be used by OEM and partner agencies for the duration of the recovery.
- Implemented February 11, 2023
- Referrals (as of 3/15/23): 112
- County Special Issues Rebuild Committee
 - Support unique or complex rebuilding/recovery efforts that involve multiple private, government, or non-profit organization concepts.
 - Identified through referral system.
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Grant Sponsorship Consideration
 - County Fire and Public Works submitted a joint sponsorship letter on March 15, 2023 to NRCS to consider sponsorship of homes with watershed damages within private property for this federal disaster recovery program.
 - After careful analysis of the program and following two separate conversations with NRCS staff, County Flood Control and the County Fire Department have decided not to participate in the NRCS EWP Program as a government sponsor and have notified the potential property owners.

○ Planning and Development

All damages are associated with the January Storm and are within the County Unincorporated, except the 15 within the City of Guadalupe.

- 146 structures Inspected (15 of them were in the City of Guadalupe), Initial Inspection Status:

	Initial Postings	Postings (May 2023)	Current Postings
Red	6	3	2
Yellow	33	32	32
Green	10	14	15
Total Postings	49	49	49

- IV Bluffs
 - Limited damage
 - County Park’s stairs suffered damage
 - 1 patio was undercut and had to be cut back
 - Minor erosion on another parcel that resulted in cutting off some concrete curbs that were hanging vertically from rebar.

Individual Assistance (IA) Application Stats (as of 11/27/23)

It is important to note that Individual Assistance has only been approved for the January Storm time period and that the County has not received significant reports of personal property damage for subsequent storms. Statistics provided for IA are only associated with the January storm.

- 1,757 Households registered
 - 1,180 referred to other programs
 - 541 approved (Eligibility Approval Rate 45.85%)
- Total approved IA dollars \$3,790,730.

FEMA announced a grace application period for residents who may have had a valid reason for not applying during the original application window. Residents were able to provide documentation as to why they didn't apply originally and submit. This grace period closed May 15, 2023.

Disaster Recovery Centers

Both of the County's joint centers with FEMA, Small Business Administration (SBA), State agencies, non-profit partners, and the County to provide a one-stop location to support community recovery were closed as of February 26, 2023. In addition to these agencies, fiscal assistance for residents with verified damage and financial need is offered through 805Undocufund, American Red Cross, Salvation Army, and Catholic Charities.

- North County Site – Allan Hancock College
 - Operational from January 28, 2023 to February 26, 2023
 - Total visitors: 1,437 households or businesses.
- South County – Direct Relief
 - Operational from January 28, 2023 to February 15, 2023
 - Total visitors: 279 households or businesses.

FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance (DSA) Teams

DSA teams went into the community to register people for FEMA Individual Assistance and provide additional support to those needing to inquire about registration status or address issues with their application. The teams concluded their outreach between January 21 to February 13, providing the following services:

- 3,176 homes canvassed, spoke with 1438 households/properties
- 89 registrations completed with additional support to 15 submitted applications
- 77 targeted business outreaches completed
- 4 government agencies supported
- 8 Community Based Organizations supported
- 4 Faith Based Organizations reached
- Estimated total reach is 11,280, including force multipliers such as fliers, word of mouth, etc.

Disaster Loan Outreach Centers (DLOC)

Disaster Loan Outreach Centers are hosted by the Small Business Administration (SBA) to support businesses of all sizes, nonprofit organizations, homeowners, and renters to receive one-on-one assistance with SBA's Customer Service Representatives to answer questions about the disaster loan program and assist in completing their disaster loan applications.

- Orcutt Union School District offices - operational from March 2-17, 2023

- Total Visitors: 60 households or businesses
- Solvang Superior Court offices – operational from March 2-18, 2023
 - Total Visitors: 46 households or businesses

Additionally, on August 9, 2023, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) issued an Administrative Disaster Declaration for various rural areas in CA including those in Santa Barbara County. Residents can apply online at <https://disasterloanassistance.sba.gov/ela/s/>. This declaration applies to winter storms impacts occurring between February 21, 2023 through July 10, 2023.

Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) application deadline for DR-4683-CA has been extended to February 26, 2024 while the application deadline for DR-4699-CA has been established as May 9, 2024.

SBA statistics for Santa Barbara County are:

- Home, Business and Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) Applications (as of 9/25/23)
 - Total Applications: 380
 - Dollars Approved: \$8,167,000
- SBA Rural Applications (as of 11/27/23)
 - Total Applications: 15
 - Total Approved: 4
 - Dollars Approved: \$233,900

Interim Housing Solutions

- Housing Authority of the County Santa Barbara continues to work with County Department of Social Services (DSS), County Community Services Department (CSD) and OEM to support rapid rehousing for individuals permanently displaced by the storm.
- DSS, CSD, American Red Cross and OEM continue to support multiple Rancho Oso families until the facility is reopened (estimated September 30, 2023).

Agricultural Impacts

- The Santa Barbara County Agricultural Commissioner's Office is continuing to collect survey forms to assess the damages/losses caused by the recent storms and is providing periodic updates as more surveys come in.
- Agricultural businesses should register for support through FEMA, SBA and the USDA Farm Services Agency to determine which program applies to their situation.
- As of 2/17/2023, 146 growers and ranchers responded to the survey and reported a combined 5,595 farm acres affected by it.
- Over 36 different types of crop, livestock and infrastructure were impacted for a combined estimated economic loss of \$169 million.
- The majority of the agricultural damage/losses was reported in the northern part of the County, in particular Santa Maria and Guadalupe.
- Strawberry crop fields were hit the hardest and suffered over \$56 million in crop losses.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: No

Fiscal Analysis:

The fiscal impact of efforts in support of this incident are ongoing and being evaluated at this time and will be reported to the Board at a future meeting.

Staffing Impacts: To be determined.

Special Instructions:

Direct the Clerk of the Board to send a e-copy of the minute order of these actions to Kendall Johnston at kejohnston@countyofsb.org.

Attachments:

Attachment A: Resolution Terminating the Proclamation of Local Emergency for the January 2023 Storm and Subsequent 2023 Winter Storms

Authored by:

Kelly Hubbard, Director Office of Emergency Management