



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: Executive Office / OES
Department No.: 990
For Agenda Of: September 2, 2008
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Tme:
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Michael F. Brown, County Executive Officer
Contact Info: Michael D. Harris, Emergency Operations Chief
681-5526
SUBJECT: Continuing Proclamation of Emergency Associated with Gap Fire

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors reaffirms the ongoing existence of local emergency due to environmental impacts, response and recovery costs from the Gap Fire.

Summary Text:

Government Code Section 8630(c) (2) mandates the Board to review the need for continuing a local emergency at least every 14 days, until the local emergency is terminated.

Background:

On July 1, 2008, the Gap Fire was ignited along the Camino del Cielo, in the National Forest above the City of Goleta. Although the Gap Fire was declared "contained" on July 28, 2008, the results of the Gap Fire continue to pose extreme peril and risk to the citizens of the City of Goleta and the unincorporated areas in the vicinity of the burn area because of the potential of flooding and landslides during the upcoming winter season.

Fire History

On July 1, 2008, at 7:30 PM, during the initial phase of the fire, the County staffed and activated the Operational Area Emergency Operations Center (EOC). These actions were necessary because Gap Fire containment was proving to be difficult. Within a brief period it became clear that the Gap Fire was posing a threat to persons in the area. As the Gap Fire grew in size and threat, and immediately after the Gap Fire caused a large-scale power outage, the Acting Emergency Services Director executed an emergency proclamation on July 2, 2008. The Board of Supervisors ratified the emergency proclamation twice (at an emergency Board meeting on July 3, 2008, and a regular meeting of the Board on July 15, 2008). With the fire contained on July 28, 2008, the Board proclamation expired on July 29, 2008.

Proclamation Recommendation

According to the draft National Forest Service's Burn Area Emergency Response (BAER) Team report, *"The (Gap) fire completely burned off all effective cover on the majority of the burned area with the exception of some of the riparian areas in the bottom of the larger drainages. While soil burn severity was largely derate, watershed response to precipitation events is expected to be high over nearly all of the fire area due to loss of cover on steep slopes. The potential for increased flows leading to flooding and debris flows is high. Runoff and sediment yield is expected to increase substantially (emphasis added)."*

The report goes on to state, *"Threats to life and property have been identified both within the fire perimeter, as well as downstream from the fire, from increased runoff and flooding potential, debris flows, erosion and sedimentation, and landslides. Initial estimates indicate that over 120 residences and 70+ business properties are at risk from flooding and sedimentation, and/or debris flows."*

Preparation and Planning Efforts

The Emergency Operations Chief is currently heading a multi-jurisdictional working group that is conducting mitigation measures and developing response plans to address the threat of flooding, debris and landslides in the areas below the Gap Fire burn area. Despite the efforts amongst the jurisdictions and various agencies, staff remains deeply concerned over the significant risks involved.

Because of the serious impact to identified watersheds within Santa Barbara County, staff recommends that a local emergency shall continue in effect until the Board of Supervisors proclaims its termination.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts: The adoption of this proclamation does not directly have a financial impact to the County. The identification of cost potentials and the budget impacts associated with mitigation efforts will be addressed by the Gap Burn Area Project Team.

Special Instructions:

The Clerk of the Board should agendize this item every 14 days for Board review, until the local emergency is terminated.

Attachments:

Board Resolution

Authored by:

Michael D. Harris

Cc: Jim Armstrong, City Administrator, Santa Barbara City
Dan Singer, City Manager, City of Goleta
Jerri Siegel, Territory Representative, Governor's Office of Emergency Services