



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: CEO/OEM  
Department No.: 012  
For Agenda Of: January 29, 2019  
Placement: Administrative  
Estimated Time:  
Continued Item: No  
If Yes, date from:  
Vote Required: Majority

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**TO:** Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Department           Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer  
          Director  
          Contact Info:       Robert Lewin, Director of Emergency Management  
**SUBJECT:**    **Re-Ratification Proclamation of Local Emergencies related to the Thomas  
                  Fire/Storm Incident**

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**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence:

As to form: N/A

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: NA

**Recommended Actions:**

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Adopt a Resolution re-ratifying the Proclamations of Local Emergencies related to the Thomas Fire/Storm Incident that exist in Santa Barbara County pursuant to Government Code Section 8630(c); and
- b) Direct the Office of Emergency Management to return within 60 days for re-ratification of the Emergency until such time that the response and recovery conditions dictate otherwise; and
- c) Determine the above actions are not a "Project" within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to Section 15378(b)(5) of the CEQA Guidelines, because the actions consist of organizational or administrative activities of the government that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

**Summary Text:**

The resolution before the Board is a re-ratification of the Proclamations of Local Emergencies related to the Thomas Fire/Storm Incident.

The Thomas Fire began in Ventura County on December 4, 2017, and shortly thereafter spread to the County of Santa Barbara. The Thomas Fire, until this fire season, was the largest wildfire in the history of California and caused power outages, widespread damage and destruction, extensive smoke and ash, and created hazardous air quality. Mandatory and voluntary evacuations were ordered. Due to the Thomas Fire Emergency, the County of Santa Barbara declared a local emergency which was ratified and re-ratified by the Board of Supervisors as required by California law.

Subsequently, on January 8, 2018, a significant storm was predicted to occur on January 9 that had the potential to threaten life and property in areas adjacent to the recently burned areas of the Thomas Fire along the south coast of Santa Barbara County. The County of Santa Barbara declared an additional local emergency on January 8<sup>th</sup> in preparation of the storm which was ratified by the Board of Supervisors as required by California law.

On January 9, 2018 the County of Santa Barbara experienced a 200 year rainfall event over one of the recently burned watersheds in the Thomas Fire burn area which caused massive mud and debris flows immediately leading to 23 deaths, further destruction and damage of public and private property, closure of state and local highways and roads, and displacement of residents and businesses.

The President and Governor Brown issued and amended emergency State proclamation and Presidential declarations that consolidated the Thomas Fire and Storm Incidents under one emergency. This resolution (Attachment A) re-ratifies the combined Proclamation of Local Emergency.

Effective January 1, 2019, Government Code Section 8630(c) has been amended to extend the required re-ratification period from 30 days to 60 days.

### **Background**

On December 4, 2017, at 1825 hours, the Thomas Fire began burning in Ventura County. The first impact to Santa Barbara County was extensive power fluctuations and outages affecting over 83,000 customers across the South County of Santa Barbara. Periodic power outages continued for many days as a result of burn damage to the electric transmission lines.

On December 5, 2017, Governor Brown declared a State of Emergency for the County of Ventura for the Thomas Fire, and on December 7, 2017, the Governor added the County of Santa Barbara to the State of Emergency.

On December 7, 2017, the first mandatory evacuation orders and evacuation warnings were issued for portions of the County. Extensive smoke and ash created hazardous air quality, which led to the closure of most South County schools on December 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. Many schools remained closed and recessed early into their holiday break.

On December 8, 2017, the President proclaimed a Presidential Declaration of Emergency for the Counties of Santa Barbara and Ventura. The Presidential Declaration included support for response activities of the federal, state and local government.

On December 8, 2017, when the Board of Supervisors was not in session, the County Executive Officer, as the Director of Emergency Services, proclaimed a local emergency in order to utilize all resources necessary to respond to the damage caused by the local emergency and receive any needed funding

through the California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA) and any other funding for both State and Federal funds that may be available. The proclamation was ratified by the Board of Supervisors on December 12, 2017, and covered the Santa Barbara County Operational Area including other jurisdictions.

On December 20, 2017, the Santa Barbara County Health Officer and Public Health Director declared a Local Health Emergency and Order Prohibiting the Endangerment of the Community through the Unsafe Removal, Transport, and Disposal of Fire Debris. This Local Health Emergency was re-ratified within each fourteen days in accordance with Health and Safety Code, section 101080 until Governor Brown waived the requirement on January 12, 2018.

On December 21, 2017 the County and allied agencies began to formally prepare for the potential of debris flows below the Thomas Burn area. Staff engaged with the USFS Burn Area Emergency Response (BAER) team and the CAL FIRE Watershed Emergency Response Team (WERT).

On January 2, 2018, the President declared a Major Disaster for the State of California, as a result of wildfires, including the Thomas Fire.

On January 7, 2018, mandatory evacuation orders and evacuation warnings were issued for portions of the County due to the anticipated storm.

On January 8, 2018, when the Board of Supervisors was not in session, the Director of Emergency Services of the County of Santa Barbara proclaimed the existence of a local emergency within Santa Barbara County as a result of the forecasted storm. The proclamation was ratified by the Board of Supervisors on January 9, 2018.

On January 9, 2018, when the Thomas Fire was only 92% contained, the County of Santa Barbara experienced an extreme rain event that resulted in several massive debris flows below the recent Thomas Fire burn scar. The debris flows caused 23 people to perish. In addition, there were many injuries and destruction of property, transportation conveyances were compromised and resulted in displacement of residents and businesses.

On January 11, 2018, FEMA granted the State's request for expanded federal disaster aid for the debris flow that occurred as a result of the Thomas Fire. The Presidential Major Disaster Declaration was amended to include flooding, mudflows, and debris flows directly related to the compromised watershed as a result of wildfires and to include individual assistance.

On January 12, 2018, the Thomas Fire was 100% contained having burnt 281,893 acres in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. It burned significant portions of Santa Barbara County's critical watershed and damaged or destroyed over 80 structures in Santa Barbara County.

On January 12, 2018, Governor Brown issued Executive Order B-46-18 to further assist recovery efforts related to the Thomas Fire and subsequent mudslides.

On January 27, 2018, full repopulation occurred.

On February 8, 2018, the Boil Water Notice for Montecito Water District's customers was lifted.

On February 28, 2018, new storm activity caused an evacuation of approximately 21,000 people in the debris flow risk areas. Fire, law enforcement, public works and Emergency Operations Center personnel were activated during the storm. Full repopulation occurred on March 2, 2018.

Between February 3 and March 5, 2018, County, numerous State and Federal agencies, and nonprofits provided assistance to 255 impacted families at the Disaster Recovery Center (DRC).

On March 5, 2018, timed with the closure of the DRC, the County opened the Montecito Center for Preparedness, Recovery, and Rebuilding (MCPRR) in Montecito and the Small Business Association opened a Disaster Loan Outreach Center (DLOC) at Calvary Chapel Santa Barbara. The DLOC closed on March 16, 2018.

On March 5, 2018, the County launched a Materials Exchange website to assist the public, facilitate the sharing of material deposited by the debris flows, and limit the amount of debris going into the local landfills. The website is located at <http://sbcountymaterialexchange.com>.

On March 12, 2018, new storm activity caused an evacuation of approximately 5,000 people in the debris flow risk areas. Fire, law enforcement, public works and Emergency Operations Center personnel were activated during the storm. Full repopulation occurred on March 13, 2018.

On March 19, 2018, new storm activity caused an evacuation of approximately 21,000 people in the debris flow risk areas. Fire, law enforcement, public works and emergency operations center personnel were activated during the storm. Full repopulation occurred on March 22, 2018.

As of April 16, 2018, all 11 debris basins had been cleared and 328,013 cubic yards of debris removed (100% complete). An additional 65,307 cubic yards of material has been removed from creeks (100% complete) and 93,313 cubic yards of material from public right of ways.

June 5, 2018 County staff presented to the Board of Supervisors the Recovery Strategic Plan to guide the recovery process. This plan is updated as needed.

On August 28, 2018, the Board of Supervisors approved submissions of projects for the “Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program”. These projects will further efforts to protect the community from future storms that could yield mud and debris flows due to the Thomas Fire.

On August 30, 2018, the Montecito Center for Preparedness, Recovery, and Rebuilding closed. Non-government organizations continue to provide services such as disaster case management, behavioral wellness, and other services to the community. County services have transitioned back to administrative departments. To continue to provide needed support to the community, the Board of Supervisors on August 28, 2018 approved funding to augment Community Outreach Liaison and disaster recovery efforts under the Office of Emergency Management. Staff is working on filling the position.

On September 20, 2018, the “Thomas Fire and 1/9 Debris Flow After-Action Report and Improvement Plan”, a written report and oral presentation from Hagerty Consulting, Inc., was presented to agency stakeholders. The review identified areas of “strength” and “considerations for improvement” based on lessons learned from the County’s response to the Thomas Fire of December 2017 and the ensuing 1/9 Debris Flow of January 9, 2018. The After Action Report went before the Board of Supervisors for final

approval on October 16, 2018. The report included an improvement plan that will guide the County moving forward on needed actions to take to improve its EOC response to disasters.

In October and December 2018, a total of six Community meetings were held in Carpinteria, Montecito and Embarcadero (west of Goleta) to ensure the communities have a clear understanding of this winter's storm season preparations and what actions they needed to take to stay safe from a debris flow. One of the meetings in Carpinteria was conducted entirely in Spanish.

In December 2018, the interactive Debris Flow Risk map that is posted at ReadySBC.org was updated after a comprehensive analysis by a consultant hired by the County and funded 75% by FEMA Hazardous Mitigation Grant.

The 2018-19 winter storm season has delivered several significant storms that have required the Flood Control District to clean out debris that was deposited from minor debris flows. The County has asked the State for continuing CDAA funding to support clean-up actions to ensure that the basins are maintained at full capacity. Further, these storms have required the convening of the Storm Risk Decision Team as well as staffing the EOC with OEM personnel during the peak periods of the storms.

On January 15, 2019, an 8-hour evacuation was issued and response resources were prepositioned after a storm was forecasted to produce rain rates that could trigger a debris flow. No damaged was reported from that storm's rainfall. Two days later, January 17, a storm forecasted to have rain rates below debris flow thresholds rapidly developed into a stronger storm. The National Weather Service issued a Flash Flood Warning that alerted that the impending storm was capable of causing debris flows. Residents were advised to shelter in place. This storm caused approximately 30,000 cubic yards of debris in the debris basins, which requires removal at a cost of approximately .5 to 1 million dollars in transportation fees. The County will, once again, ask the State for continuing CDAA funding to support clean-up actions to ensure that the basins are maintained at full capacity.

Recovery efforts continue to address community emergency communication protocols, cost recovery, infrastructure, debris storage opportunities and rebuilding efforts. The Community Wellness Team (comprised of over 13 organizational providers working in close collaboration) continues to provide a spectrum of behavioral health, spiritual and emotional wellness services within the community in response to the Thomas Fire and the 1/9 Debris Flow. Over 10,000 mental health contacts have occurred in the community as result of this team.

County staff continue to update damage assessment information and inspect structures. As of January 4, 2019, 41 structures impacted by the **Thomas Fire** remain red-tagged, 10 remain yellow-tagged, and 36 are listed as green-tagged. 112 structures impacted by the **Storm** remain red-tagged, 139 remain yellow-tagged and 385 are listed as green-tagged. An interactive map of tagged structures is located at ReadySBC.gov.

**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 future meetings.

**Special Instructions:**

Direct Clerk of the Board to send a copy of the minute order to: Office of Emergency Management,  
Attn: Sonia Thompson, Department Business Specialist

**Attachments:**

Attachment A: Resolution

**Authored by:**

Robert Lewin, Director of Office of Emergency Management