



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: November 20, 2007
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: Termination of Proclamation of Emergency Associated with Zaca Fire

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors adopt a resolution that terminates the previously proclaimed state of local emergency due to the Zaca Fire, voices the concern of the Board over impacts from the Zaca Fire, directs staff to maintain a state of readiness and directs staff to continue to work with local, state and federal representatives in attempt to further continue prevention activities.

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. Since August 3, 2007, the Board has adopted and renewed the proclamation of a local emergency. Staff believes that a continued proclamation is not warranted because the immediate threat has passed. In addition, staff has been able to initiate some measures that seek to help protect people and property from anticipated flooding, siltation and debris flow. The termination of the local proclamation will not have a negative impact on those jurisdictions obtaining funding through the California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA).

Background:

On July 4, 2007, the Zaca Fire was ignited north of Los Olivos, and east of Foxen Canyon Road. Although the Zaca Fire was declared "contained" on September 4, 2007 (60 days after its ignition), and

controlled by the National Forest Service on October 29, 2007 (115 days after ignition), the approximately 240,207 acres of burn area in watershed areas have created conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property in Santa Barbara County.

The National Forest Service's Burn Area Emergency Response (BAER) Team report has been received by staff. According to the BAER report, *"This analysis indicates that increased debris flow, slope movements, and greater sediment generation are likely from the twelve affected watersheds."* The report goes on to state, *"Peak flow increases from the fire will be bulked by ash, debris and other floatable and transportable material within the channel areas. There is a high probability that post-fire flows from the first runoff producing rain events will see a high concentration of ash discharged from the burn area a long distance downstream to the Gibraltar and Cachuma Reservoirs. This has high potential to affect the municipal water supplies in both Cachuma and Gibraltar Reservoirs. The drainage area above Lake Cachuma is a Municipal watershed that supplies drinking water to the entire front country of Santa Barbara County from Carpinteria (sic) to Goleta. The total area of watershed burned above Lake Cachuma is about 56%. Of this, 36% burned at high and moderate burn severity. The potential for adverse water quality effects, post fire flooding and sediment yield is very high."*

The Zaca Fire's impact to the watershed is further highlighted in the US Army Corps of Engineers September 2007, report that, in part, states, *"Greatly exacerbating the problem (the Santa Maria levee) and creating an unusual threat to the City of Santa Maria is the recent Zaca wildfire that burned about 26% (122 square miles) of uncontrolled watershed above the Santa Maria Valley levees. The low to moderate flows that threaten the levee are now considered to be even more likely to occur this coming flood season due to the potential for increased runoff from the burned areas. This potential was clearly demonstrated in 1966. In 1966 the Wellman wildfire burned a similar amount of the Sisquoc River watershed. Later that year, a relatively small amount of rainfall (< 2-year frequency) generated a relatively large peak flow (~ 20-year) that caused significant damage to the south levee. It was later concluded that the only reason the levee didn't fail completely was because of the short duration of the peak."*

In recognition of the threat posed by the watershed impacts from the Zaca Fire to the Santa Maria levee, Gibraltar Reservoir and Cachuma Lake, County staff and staff from other local jurisdictions have undertaken several steps in an attempt to reduce potential impacts. These steps include Santa Maria River channeling, rock and equipment stationing by the Santa Maria River levee, the placement of debris booms, excavation, placement of trash racks to collect debris, the installation of remote

monitoring equipment and other prevention steps. Many of these measures have been funded, in part, with funds from the CDAA.

According to a November 5, 2007, correspondence from Michael Sabbaghian, PE, Acting Recovery Branch Chief for the State Office of Emergency Services (OES), “*Therefore, any damage directly attributed to the fire would be considered by OES for reimbursement.*” In addition, Mr. Sabbaghian states, “*Existence or lack thereof (a proclamation) will not effect the CDAA funding that we have already committed. CDAA eligibility is tied to the event that occurred during the fire incident period, not the local proclamation ...*”

Because there will not be a fiscal impact associated with termination of the state of emergency, and because actions are being undertaken, or have been undertaken that, are an attempt to protect people and property, staff recommends the termination of the state of emergency. Staff also recommends that the Board adopt the attached resolution to voice its concerns over the real and potential impacts from the Zaca Fire.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts: Termination of the current proclamation will not effect funding consideration for those entities who have filed claims. Estimates indicate that approximately \$2 million of expenses have been incurred by the County in addressing the Zaca Fire. The County has filed for CDAA reimbursement with State OES and, like other impacted jurisdictions, termination of a local proclamation of a state of emergency will not have a negative impact on recouping some of these costs.

Special Instructions:

The Clerk of the Board should provide a copy of the executed resolution to Michael Harris, Emergency Operations Chief.

Attachments:

Board Resolution 07-_____

Authored By:

Michael D. Harris