




BOARD OF SUPERVISORS **Agenda Number:**
AGENDA LETTER

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: June 4, 2024
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 February 2024 Storms, Last Action April 2, 2024, 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 February 2024 Storms in Santa Barbara County pursuant to Government Code Section 8630; and
- b) Receive an update on the February 2024 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 February 2024 Storms initially declared by the Director of Emergency Services on January 31, 2024 and ratified by the Board of Supervisors on April 2, 2024. 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.

Heavy rainstorms fell February 4, 2024 for a period of 48 hours, preceded by an earlier storm that occurred January 31 to February 1, 2024. The February 4, 2024 storm resulted in heavy rain, flooding, and high winds, with the heaviest rainfall in the southern part of the County. The rains resulted in the potential for life threatening and damaging flooding in existing burn scar areas, near impacted creeks and low-lying areas, as a result of the storms and ongoing saturated soils resulting in ongoing impacts to residents and infrastructure.

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 a Flood Watch, countywide Flash Flood Warnings, and High Wind Warning issued by the National Weather Service and the protective actions by the Sheriff's Office. Government Code section 8630(b) requires the Board of Supervisors to ratify a Local Emergency within seven days. Section 8630(c) requires the Board to review the need for the continued existence of the Local Emergency at least every 60 days, and Section 8630(d) requires termination of the Local Emergency at the earliest possible date that conditions warrant.

The County Office of Emergency Management (OEM), County Executive Office, and Public Works continue 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.

Response Efforts

Due to the ongoing storms throughout 2024 the County continued to respond to the impacts of significant rain and wind 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 25, 2024 County Departments and Operational Area partners started emergency protective actions and mitigations to prepare for the coming storms.
- County OEM held public safety coordination meetings from January 31 through February 5, 2024 and again from February 15-21, 2024. Additionally, OEM and other public safety agencies continued to discuss and determine additional actions needed in between and after each major storm due to additional smaller rain events.
- On February 2, 2024 the National Weather Service issued a Flood Watch, as well as a High Wind Warning for potentially damaging winds that could result in downed trees, power lines, and dangerous seas.
- On February 2, 2024, the County issued an Evacuation Warning to vulnerable areas related to the Thomas Fire Storm Risk Considerations Map, the Cave Fire and Alisal Fire burn scar areas. The City of Santa Barbara issued an Evacuation Warning for properties in the vicinity of Sycamore Creek, from Stanwood Drive to parts of Ninos Drive.
- The County/Operational Area EOC opened on February 2, 2024 and remained activated through February 6, 2024.
- On February 3, 2024, the areas under Evacuation Warning were upgraded to an Evacuation Order. This Evacuation Order was also extended to California State Park's campgrounds within the County, including Refugio, Carpinteria, Gaviota, and El Capitan. These actions were issued as a result of the immediate flooding threat.
- On February 4, 2024, the Governor of the State of California proclaimed a State of Emergency to exist in eight impacted counties including Santa Barbara County.
- On February 5, 2024 all Evacuation Orders within the County and City of Santa Barbara were cancelled.
- On February 15, 2024 the National Weather Service issued a Flood Watch for the majority of the County. Wind Advisories, High Wind Warnings, and Coastal Flood Advisories were issued in subsequent days for multiple areas of the County.
- On February 17, 2024 the County issued an Evacuation Warning for the properties along waterways associated with the Thomas, Cave and Alisal burn areas. The City of Santa Barbara issued an Evacuation Warning for properties in the vicinity of Sycamore Creek, from Stanwood Dr. down to parts of Ninos Dr., and properties in the vicinity of Mission Creek, from Cota St. down to Highway 101 and between Chapala St. and Castillo St.
- On February 19, Evacuation Warnings were cancelled for the properties along waterways associated with the Thomas and Cave burn areas, and remained in place for all other areas.
- Highway 144, Highway 192, and Refugio Road were closed or significantly impacted due to flooding, debris and road damages. These impacts along with additional rainfall and thunderstorm forecasts through February 21 impeded the cancellation of remaining Evacuation Warnings.
- On February 20 and 21, all remaining Evacuation Warnings within the County and City of Santa Barbara were cancelled.

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.

On February 13, 2024, OEM facilitated the FEMA Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) with County Public Works, County Parks, CalOES, and FEMA. The PDA process was in support of the County’s request for consideration to be included in FEMA major declaration DR-4769-CA (declared by the President on April 14, 2024) for the first February storm. FEMA and CalOES staff conducted site visits of the largest dollar damage sites to verify damages, eligibility, and estimated costs.

County Estimated Storm Costs (as of 5/13/24)

	Emergency Protective Measures (Categories A-B)	Permanent Work (Categories C-G)
February Storm 1 (DR-4769)	\$8,541,379	\$7,658,520
February Storm 2 (Pending)	\$1,545,800	\$2,085,700

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.

Community Recovery Assistance

Many of the County’s residents, businesses, and agricultural businesses continue to suffer impacts from February 2024 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 will continue to be used by OEM and partner agencies for the duration of the recovery.
 - Implemented January 31, 2024
 - Referrals (as of 5/13/24): 10
- County Special Issues Rebuild Committee
 - Support unique or complex rebuilding/recovery efforts that involve multiple private, government, or non-profit organization concepts.
- Planning and Development

All damages are associated with the February Storm and are within the County Corporate and Unincorporated areas.

- 85 structures Inspected, Initial Inspection Status:

	Initial Postings	Postings (May 2024)	Current Postings
Red	10	4	4
Yellow	39	45	45
Green	26	36	36
Total Postings	75	85	85

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 10, 2024.

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 February 13 to February 15, providing the following services:

- 257 homes canvassed, spoke with 250 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.

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 families.

Agricultural Impacts

In regards to the agricultural community, these disaster impacts are self-reported through the Agricultural Commissioner's website at <https://www.countyofsb.org/266/Agricultural-Commissioner>.

- As of February 15, 2024, Agricultural Impacts were estimated at \$41,809,121 at 35 different sites. This includes damages to crops, as well as farm buildings and machinery.
- The Santa Barbara County Agricultural Commissioner's Office is continuing to collect survey.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: No

Fiscal Analysis:

The fiscal impacts to the County continue to be evaluated. The County was included in a Presidential Disaster Declaration for the first February 2024 Storm (DR4769) and the County Executive Office is currently working with FEMA and CalOES to begin the cost recovery process, which will reimburse 93.75% of the County's eligible costs. Unfortunately, the County was not approved for FEMA Public Assistance for the second February 2024 storm. OEM staff will continue working with CalOES in the hopes to secure California Disaster Assistance Act funding, which would reimburse up to 75% of the County's eligible costs

Staffing Impacts:

There are no staffing impacts associated with terminating the emergency proclamation.

Special Instructions:

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

Attachments:

Attachment A: Resolution Terminating the Proclamation of Local Emergency for the February 2024 Storms

Authored by:

Philip Saunders, Associate Director Office of Emergency Management