



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: Public Health
Department No.: 041
For Agenda Of: January 9, 2018
Placement: Departmental
Estimated Time: 10 minutes
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Public Health Director: Van Do-Reynoso, PhD
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Contact Info: Susan Klein-Rothschild, MSW
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SUBJECT: Re-Ratification of Declaration of Local Health Emergency in Thomas Fire Last Passed January 3, 2018 (Fourteen-Day Renewal)

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: Not Applicable

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Not Applicable

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors consider the following recommendations:

- a) Adopt a resolution re-ratifying a declaration by the Local Health Officer declaring a Local Health Emergency due to an immediate threat to public health and safety based on the expected presence of toxic materials and hazardous substances in fire debris from the Thomas Fire. (Attachment A.) (This declaration of Local Health Emergency prohibits the removal of fire debris without first having a hazardous materials inspection conducted.); and
- b) Determine that the recommended action is not a “project” within the California Environmental Quality Act review per CEQA Guideline Section 15378(b)(4) and 15378(b)(5), since the recommended action is a government fiscal activity and government organizational activity which does not involve commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment.

Summary Text:

This item is on the agenda to re-ratify the Local Health Emergency declaration that was last passed on January 3, 2018.

The Local Health Emergency declaration is for the narrow purpose of preventing fire debris removal without a hazardous materials inspection conducted by either the County, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Once a hazardous inspection has concluded, and if toxic materials are identified, then a property owner may: 1)

opt out of the Fire Debris Clearance Program and obtain permission from the County to privately remove the hazardous substances, or 2) as may be applicable, work with the County, DTSC, or EPA to remove the hazardous substances. The Board of Supervisors approved the original resolution to ratify the Declaration of Local Health Emergency in Thomas Fire on December 21, 2017.

Background:

The Thomas Fire began on December 4, 2017 and is one of the largest wildfires in California history burning more than 272,800 acres in both Ventura and Santa Barbara counties. As of December 22, 2017, the Thomas Fire was 65% contained. More than 8,000 firefighters and 876 fire engines have been assigned to fight the fire. The impacts of this fire are still being assessed. At the time of this writing, approximately 87 structures have been damaged or destroyed.

There is an immediate threat to public health and safety due to toxic materials and hazardous substances expected to be present in burned debris on public and private property. Building materials such as siding, roofing tiles, and insulation can create dangerous ash and dust particles that may contain asbestos, heavy metals, and other toxic materials. Household hazardous substances may include items such as paint, gasoline, cleaning products, pesticides, compressed gas cylinders, and other chemicals. Exposure to these toxic materials and hazardous substances during fire debris removal activities may lead to acute and chronic health effects, and may cause long-term public health and environmental impacts.

On December 20, 2017, the Public Health Officer, Dr. Charity Dean, declared a Local Health Emergency in accordance with Health and Safety Code section 101080. The Local Health Emergency declaration is for the narrow purpose of preventing fire debris removal without a hazardous materials inspection conducted by either the County, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Although the Local Health Emergency declaration allows a property to be inspected without a right of entry if needed, the County will work closely with impacted property owners during the inspection process. Once a hazardous inspection has concluded, and if toxic materials are identified, then the property owner may: 1) opt out of the Fire Debris Clearance Program and obtain permission from the County to privately remove the hazardous substances, or 2) as may be applicable, work with the County, DTSC, or EPA to remove the hazardous substances. The Local Health Emergency declaration applies to the incorporated and unincorporated areas of Santa Barbara County.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: N/A

There is no fiscal impact associated with this declaration of a Local Health Emergency

Attachments:

Attachment A: Resolution Re-ratifying the Declaration of Local Health Emergency
Attachment B: December 20, 2017 Declaration by Local Health Officer

Authored by: Susan Klein-Rothschild, MSW