



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: February 6, 2018
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Time:
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department: Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer and Director of
Director: Emergency Services
Contact Info: Terri Nisich, Assistant CEO
Robert Lewin, Director of Emergency Management
SUBJECT: Thomas Fire/Storm Incident – **Update and Local Proclamation Re-Ratification**

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence:

As to form: NA

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 a Local Emergencies related to the Thomas Fire and subsequent Storm Emergency declared by the Director of Emergency Services on December 8, 2017, and January 8, 2018, respectively, when the Board of Supervisors was not in session, pursuant to Government Code Section 8550 et. seq. and Chapter 12, Section 12-5(a) of the Santa Barbara County Code, now combined and re-named Thomas Fire/Storm Incident; and
- b) Direct the Office of Emergency Management to return monthly 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 Thomas Fire began in Ventura County in December 4, 2017 and shortly thereafter spread to the County of Santa Barbara. The Thomas Fire is the largest in the history of California and caused power outages, widespread damage and destruction, and extensive smoke and ash created hazardous air quality.

Mandatory and voluntary evacuation orders were made throughout the County. 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, the County of Santa Barbara experienced unprecedented rainfall. Rainfall from the storm over the Thomas Fire burn area caused massive mud and debris flow leading to numerous deaths, further destruction and damage of public and private property, closure of State and local roads, and displacement of residents and businesses. Due to the impending Storm Emergency, the County of Santa Barbara declared another local emergency which was ratified by the Board of Supervisors as required by California law.

The President and Governor Brown have issued and amended emergency proclamations, declarations, and/or executive orders that consolidated the Thomas Fire and Storm Incident.

This resolution (Attachment A) re-ratifies Local Emergency proclamations, and combines the local emergency issued for the Thomas Fire and the local emergency issued for the Storm Incident, and renames the now combined event as the Thomas Fire/Storm Incident.

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 outages in the South County, which affected 83,000 customers. Periodic power outages have continued, 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.

Mandatory evacuation orders and evacuation warnings were initially issued for portions of the County on December 7, 2017. Extensive smoke and ash created hazardous air quality, which led to the closure of most South County schools December 7th and 8th. Many schools elected to remain 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 supports 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 and any other funding both State and Federal funds that may be available. The proclamation was ratified by the Board of Supervisors on December 12, 2017 and covers the Santa Barbara County Operational Area (i.e., entire geographic area of the county), including cities, unincorporated county areas, and special districts. The local emergency was re-ratified on January 9, 2018.

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 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 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, the Thomas Fire was only 92% contained, and the County of Santa Barbara experienced an extreme rain event that resulted in several massive mudflows below the Thomas Fire burn scar. The mudflows captured boulders and debris that led to at least 21 deaths, missing and injured persons, destruction of property, and displacement of residents and businesses.

On January 11, 2018, FEMA granted the State's request for expanded federal disaster aid for the mudflows that occurred as a result of the Thomas Fire. The Presidential Major Disaster Declaration has been 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.

As recovery efforts are ongoing, potential future storms may cause additional mud and debris flow leading to more damage to homes, properties, businesses, local roadways and bridges, and potential road closures.

County staff are working to compile a preliminary damage assessment.

This resolution (Attachment A) re-ratifies Local Emergency proclamations, and combines the local emergency issued for the Thomas Fire and the local emergency issued for the Storm Incident, and renames the now combined event to Thomas Fire/Storm Incident.

Fiscal Analysis:

The fiscal impact of efforts in support of this incident is being evaluated at this time and will be reported to the Board at future meetings.

Special Instructions:

*Thomas Fire/Storm Incident
Update and Local Proclamation Re-ratification
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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 Re-ratifying the Proclamations of Local Emergencies by combining both,
now named Thomas Fire/Storm Incident

Authored by:

Robert Lewin, Director of Office of Emergency Management

cc:

Eric Peterson, Fire Chief
Bill Brown, Sheriff