



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: Fire
Department No.: 031
For Agenda Of: April 4, 2023
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) Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer
Contact Info: Kelly Hubbard, Director of Emergency Management

SUBJECT: Re-ratification of Proclamation of Local Emergency Caused by Drought Conditions, Last Action February 7, 2023, All Supervisorial Districts (Sixty-Day Renewal)

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Adopt a Resolution re-ratifying the Proclamation of Local Emergency Caused by Drought Conditions that exist in Santa Barbara County pursuant to Government Code Section 8630; and
- b) Direct the Office of Emergency Management to return every sixty (60) days for re-ratification of the Emergency until such a time that weather and water supply conditions dictate otherwise; and
- c) Determine that these actions are exempt from the provisions of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant CEQA Guidelines Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15269(a).

Summary Text:

This item is on the agenda to re-ratify the Proclamation of Local Emergency Caused by Drought Conditions within the County of Santa Barbara ("County"). The Board issued a Proclamation of Local Emergency on July 13, 2021, and has reviewed and re-ratified the proclamation no later than every 60 days thereafter.

With the recent rainfall in the County, we are no longer listed as having impacts on the US Drought Monitor. However, as of March 22, 2023, the California State Drought Emergency remains in effect. On February 13, 2023 the Governor of California issued Executive Order N-3-23 and on March 10, 2023 Executive Order N-4-23 reaffirming the ongoing drought status throughout the state and emphasizing the need to identify and utilize opportunities to capture storm water for groundwater recharge.

On July 8, 2021, the Governor of California added Santa Barbara County to the list of counties experiencing a drought and subject to his emergency declaration initially issued on April 10, 2021. Continuing the proclamation of the existence of a Drought Emergency within the County provides the County and local water utilities the ability to take immediate actions to mitigate and respond to the current drought conditions, including taking actions to optimize recharging ground water basins with the current rain water that has been captured in reservoirs throughout the County.

Background:

Status: As of March 21, 2023, major reservoirs in the County have filled to capacity or are expected to fill to capacity in the near future. While surface water reservoirs can fill quickly, groundwater basins tend to need several years of above average precipitation to recover. Although the County and the water utilities that serve this County have been working since the last drought to increase water supplies, implement mitigation measures, and encourage the continued conservation of water by all residents and businesses, many factors affect the County's drought conditions.

The City of Santa Barbara's Charles E. Meyer Desalination Plant is operational and producing drinking water for the City of Santa Barbara. The facility has the capacity to produce nearly 3 million gallons of water per day, which is equivalent to 3,125 acre-feet of water annually.

Groundwater Sustainability Agencies have been established within the County to facilitate the coordinated long-term sustainment of groundwater basins. Many of these basins have water levels at or near historical lows due to extended drought. Groundwater Sustainability Agencies are required to develop and submit Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) based on a tiered system of deadlines. The GSPs for the Santa Ynez River Valley, the Cuyama Valley, and the San Antonio Creek Valley Groundwater Basins were submitted on time. The GSPs for Montecito and Carpinteria Groundwater Basins are still being developed. No plan is required for the Santa Maria River Valley or Goleta Groundwater Basins because they have undergone adjudication.

Recognizing that the County's drinking water utilities have various water supply sources and levels of drought impact, each agency sets their own Drought Preparedness and Water Shortage Contingency Plans or similar policies. These plans outline each agency's drought stages and the conservation measures recommended or required at each. Stages are not uniformly defined amongst the water utilities and should be reviewed individually. In general, water waste prohibitions and water use reduction measures increase as the stage number increases. Understanding where our water comes from and what conservation measures are in place for various water providers in the County can be found at www.waterwisesb.org.

Legislative & Policy Actions:

On February 13, 2023 the Governor of California issued Executive Order N-3-23 and on March 10, 2023 Executive Order N-4-23 reaffirming the ongoing drought status throughout the state and emphasizing the need to identify and utilize opportunities to capture storm water for groundwater recharge.

June 10, 2022: Pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order N-7-22, the State Water Board's new statewide emergency water conservation regulation became effective. This emergency regulation requires increased water conservation to address California's new normal of climate extremes. The regulation bans using potable (drinkable) water on decorative or non-functional grass at commercial, industrial, and institutional properties and requires urban water suppliers to implement all demand-reduction actions under Level 2 of their Water Shortage Contingency Plans.

May 24, 2022: Pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order N-7-22, County Ordinance 5158 was adopted to incorporate the requirements of the executive order in the County water well permitting process. County staff have worked with Groundwater Sustainability Agencies to coordinate these well permitting changes.

July 8, 2021: The Governor issued Executive Order N-10-21 calling on all Californians to voluntarily reduce their water use by 15 percent from their 2020 levels, and setting forth measures that can be undertaken to save water and money.

September 23, 2021: Governor signed into law Senate Bill (SB) 552 (Hertzberg), which established basic drought planning and resiliency requirements to help small water systems and domestic well communities prevent water outages. The County has previously established internal and external drought task forces to manage the County's drought response, share information, and develop emergency plans for significant drought related water outages. The internal task force consists of staff from Office of Emergency Management, the County Water Agency, and Environmental Health Services, and is reviewing the legislation and identifying how to support the County's ongoing compliance with SB 552. The external task force also includes staff invited from all water purveyors and groundwater sustainability agencies in the County. Both task forces began meeting in summer 2021 and will continue to do so for the duration of the drought. In addition to these task forces, Environmental Health Services staff interact with representatives of, regulated water systems less than 200 connections during routine inspections and reporting, and water well drillers during permitting and inspection activities.

Local Emergency:

Due to the current drought conditions and the expectation that these conditions are likely to continue, the proclamation of the existence of a Drought Emergency within the County will provide the County and the water utilities the ability to take immediate actions to mitigate and respond to the current drought conditions. It is important for the County and the water utilities to take measures now to mitigate the impacts of drought on our community and to ensure the resilience of our drinking water systems. Government Code Section 8630(a) allows the County acting through the Board of Supervisors to proclaim a local emergency. 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 and Section 8630(d) requires termination of the Proclamation of Local Emergency at the earliest possible date that conditions warrant.

The County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is not currently increasing its activation level for this disaster. However, OEM will monitor conditions, update the County's emergency drinking water contingency plans, facilitate timely sharing of information, funding and collaborative project opportunities, and coordinate with all partners, including County Public Works, drinking water agencies, water supply agencies and groundwater agencies within our County.

Performance Measure: N/A

Contract Renewals and Performance Outcomes: N/A

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts: Budgeted: No

Fiscal Analysis:

Narrative: There are no additional costs at this time. Staff will report within future ratifications any cost implications of the Proclamation. Project code 21DRGT has been established for tracking of staffing costs and time associated with drought activities.

Key Contract Risks: Not applicable.

Staffing Impacts:

Legal Positions:

0

FTEs:

0

There are no FTE personnel resourced to management of the drought.

Special Instructions:

Direct the Clerk of the Board to send a copy of the fully executed resolution and a copy of the minute order to:

Office of Emergency Management, Attn: Sonia Thompson
Flood Control District office, Attn: Christina Lopez

Attachments:

Attachment A: Resolution Re-ratifying the Proclamation of Local Emergency Caused by Drought Conditions

Authored by:

Kelly Hubbard, Director of OEM (805) 681-5526

cc:

Matt Young, Public Works Department