

BEFORE THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF FRESNO
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE MATTER REGARDING THE
SEVERE DROUGHT

RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING THE
EXISTENCE OF A LOCAL
EMERGENCY DUE TO THE DROUGHT

WHEREAS, a local emergency presently exists in the County of Fresno in accordance with the ratification and proclamation thereof by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Fresno on the 4th day of May, 2021, as a result of a crippling disaster, which severely impaired public health and public safety, created by the conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property which have arisen within the County caused by the Severe Drought; and

WHEREAS, on April 29, 2021, the Emergency Services Director of the County of Fresno, proclaimed a local emergency due to the drought; and

WHEREAS, on May 4, 2021, the Board of Supervisors of the County of Fresno ratified the proclamation by the Emergency Services Director and adopted a resolution proclaiming the local emergency status; and

WHEREAS, on May 10, 2021, the Governor of the State of California expanded his April 21, 2021 drought proclamation to include 39 additional Counties, including the County of Fresno; and

WHEREAS, on July 8, 2021, the Governor of the State of California expanded his April 21, 2021 drought proclamation to include an additional 9 Counties to bring the total to 50 of the 58 Counties within the State; and

WHEREAS, on October 19, 2021, the Governor of the State of California expanded the drought emergency Statewide; and

WHEREAS, the California Department of Water Resources is currently reporting that precipitation in the Tulare Lake Hydrologic Region is only 58% of average for the year; and

WHEREAS the California Department of Water Resource's snowpack monitoring division reports that current snowpack is at 0%; and

1 WHEREAS, drought conditions have continued to cause massive numbers of trees to
2 die, increasing Fresno County's risk of wildfires, and increasing the severity and spread of
3 wildfires, as experienced during the Creek Fire; and

4 WHEREAS, the U.S. Drought Monitor maintained by the United States National
5 Oceanographic and Aeronautic Administration places nearly 100% of the State of California in a
6 moderate drought condition, with 97% of the State in severe drought condition; and

7 WHEREAS, it is estimated that hundreds of water wells will fail or go dry, including
8 private, domestic, community, and agricultural wells which will cause significant health, safety,
9 and economic issues for Fresno County residents and businesses; and

10 WHEREAS, surface water supply constraints create a demonstrable and unsustainable
11 increase in demand for groundwater which is likely to cause additional dry wells for community
12 water systems, private domestic wells, and agricultural wells, creating economic hardships; and

13 WHEREAS, it is anticipated that the need for the drilling of new wells and the availability
14 of drilling contractors may cause homeowners and farmers to go an extended amount of time
15 without water to their homes and crops while they wait for new wells to be drilled; and

16 WHEREAS, based on those projections and information from federal agencies,
17 Westlands Water District was provided only 0% of its normal water allocation of Central Valley
18 Project water for their agricultural water users, which resulted in many acres of prime farmland
19 unplanted during the 2022 growing season; and

20 WHEREAS, contractors for the State Water Project are facing similar dire water
21 projections; the Department of Water Resources recently announced a 5% allocation due to the
22 persistent dry conditions; and

23 WHEREAS, the California Department of Water Resources and the State Water
24 Resources Control Board along with other State and Federal agencies have informed farmers
25 and the local agricultural related businesses to prepare for drought conditions; and

26 WHEREAS, it is anticipated that the need for the drilling of new wells and the availability
27 of drilling contractors may cause homeowners and farmers to go an extended amount of time
28 without water to their homes and crops while they wait for new wells to be drilled; and

29 WHEREAS, water delivery reductions to agriculture are so significant that it has caused
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1 County of Fresno farmers to idle thousands of acres of crop land and divert all available water
2 to keep permanent crops alive; and

3 WHEREAS, the cumulative crop reductions will result in the loss of jobs in Fresno
4 County communities and the significant loss of direct and indirect crop revenue will negatively
5 impact Fresno County businesses and Fresno County governments' tax revenue; and

6 WHEREAS, substantial economic impact to agricultural crops, the industries that
7 support agriculture, and the people who work in the agricultural industry are anticipated; and

8 WHEREAS, the long-term ramifications of the current drought will have a significant
9 negative impact on Fresno County and pose a danger to the health and welfare of its residents
10 and industries; and

11 WHEREAS, County of Fresno farming communities, already severely impacted by the
12 COVID-19 pandemic and accompanying economic downturn, will incur additional severe
13 economic hardship related to lost agricultural production including businesses and citizens who
14 depend upon a robust agricultural industry for their livelihood; and

15 WHEREAS, local resources are inadequate to cope with the effects of said emergency
16 and the combined forces of other political subdivisions of the State are required to assist the
17 County to combat the effects of said emergency; and

18 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED by the Board of Supervisors that a
19 Local Emergency exists throughout Fresno County and that said Local Emergency shall be
20 deemed to continue to exist until its termination is proclaimed by the Board of Supervisors; and

21 IT IS FURTHER PROCLAIMED AND ORDERED that during the existence of said local
22 emergency the powers, functions, and duties for the emergency organization of this County
23 shall be those prescribed by State law, ordinances and resolutions of this County, and by the
24 County of Fresno Operational Area Master Emergency Services Plan; and

25 IT IS REQUESTED that the Governor of California make available assistance programs
26 including, but not limited to, California Disaster Assistance Act, to provide relief to the
27 individuals, businesses, public and private agencies that are harmed by this disaster; and
28 increase funding to relevant programs of the State Water Resources Control Board and
29 Department of Water Resources; and
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1 IT IS FURTHER REQUESTED that the Governor of California waive all regulations and
2 statutes that may hinder response to this drought emergency; and

3 IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the State
4 Director of the Office of Emergency Services.

5 THE FOREGOING, was passed and adopted by the following vote of the Board of
6 Supervisors of the County of Fresno this 6th day of September, 2022, to-wit:
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10 AYES: Supervisors Brandau, Magsig, Mendes, Pacheco, Quintero

11 NOES: None

12 ABSENT: None

13 ABSTAINED: None

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16 Brian Pacheco, Chairman of the
17 Board of Supervisors of the County of Fresno

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20 ATTEST:
21 Bernice E. Seidel
22 Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
23 County of Fresno, State of California

24 By:  _____
25 Deputy
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