

**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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 State is only 50% of average for the year, making 2020-21 the third driest year for California on record; and

**WHEREAS** the California Department of Water Resource’s snow pack 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 100% of the State of California in a  
6 moderate drought condition, with 94% 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 initially provided only 5% of its normal water allocation of Central  
18 Valley Project water for their agricultural water users, and in fact the allocation was later  
19 reduced to 0%, which resulted in many acres of prime farmland unplanted during the 2021  
20 growing season; and

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

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

27           **WHEREAS**, it is anticipated that the need for the drilling of new wells and the availability  
28 of drilling contractors may cause homeowners and farmers to go an extended amount of time  
29 without water to their homes and crops while they wait for new wells to be drilled; and  
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1           **WHEREAS**, water delivery reductions to agriculture are so significant that it has caused  
2 County of Fresno farmers to idle thousands of acres of crop land and divert all available water  
3 to keep permanent crops alive; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

26           **IT IS REQUESTED** that the Governor of California make available assistance programs  
27 including, but not limited to, California Disaster Assistance Act, to provide relief to the  
28 individuals, businesses, public and private agencies that are harmed by this disaster; and  
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1 increase funding to relevant programs of the State Water Resources Control Board and  
2 Department of Water Resources; and

3 **IT IS FURTHER REQUESTED** that the Governor of California waive all regulations and  
4 statutes that may hinder response to this drought emergency; and

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

7 **THE FOREGOING**, was passed and adopted by the following vote of the Board of  
8 Supervisors of the County of Fresno this 22<sup>nd</sup> of February, 2022, to-wit:  
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12 AYES: Supervisors Brandau, Magsig, Mendes, Pacheco, Quintero

13 NOES: None

14 ABSENT: None

15 ABSTAINED: None

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19 Brian Pacheco, Chairman of the  
20 Board of Supervisors of the County of Fresno

21  
22 **ATTEST:**

23 Bernice E. Seidel  
24 Clerk of the Board of Supervisors  
25 County of Fresno, State of California

26 By:   
27 Deputy