

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 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

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

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

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

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18 WHEREAS, based on those projections and information from federal agencies,
19 Westlands Water District was initially provided only 5% of its normal water allocation of Central
20 Valley Project water for their agricultural water users, and in fact the allocation was later
21 reduced to 0%, which resulted in many acres of prime farmland unplanted during the 2021
22 growing season; and

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

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

29
30 WHEREAS, it is anticipated that the need for the drilling of new wells and the availability
31 of drilling contractors may cause homeowners and farmers to go an extended amount of time
32 without water to their homes and crops while they wait for new wells to be drilled; and

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 support
8 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

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 12th day of July, 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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18 Brian Pacheco, Chairman of the
19 Board of Supervisors of the County of Fresno
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22 ATTEST:
23 Bernice E. Seidel
24 Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
25 County of Fresno, State of California

26 By: 
27 Deputy
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