



Board Agenda Item 28

DATE: March 19, 2024

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Paul Nerland, County Administrative Officer/Emergency Services Director

SUBJECT: Continuation of the existence of a Local Emergency - February 2023 Winter Storms

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Adopt Resolution proclaiming continuation of the local emergency status relating to the February 2023 Winter Storms and request that the Governor provide resources and support to mitigate and recover from the event.

Approval of the recommended action will ensure that the local emergency status remains in effect and permit the potential recovery of eligible costs, and it will also allow for the County to request relief for public agencies that are impacted by this disaster. This item is countywide.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

No viable options are available.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The recommended action is necessary to ensure specific liability protection, emergency powers of the Emergency Services Director, and potential recovery of eligible costs, if any, from the State and Federal funds.

DISCUSSION:

On March 2, 2023, the Emergency Services Director proclaimed the existence of a local emergency due to extreme weather conditions, power outages, unprecedented snowfall, limited ingress and egress to Fresno County residents in the mountain areas and foothills. California Government Code (GC), section (§) 8630 authorizes proclamation of a local emergency by your Board or by an official so designated by ordinance when your Board is not in session and cannot immediately be called into session. Fresno County Ordinance Code, Chapter 2.44, designates the County Administrative Officer as the Emergency Services Director. Pursuant to County Ordinance, your Board is requested to confirm the proclamation of a local emergency within seven days by ratifying the proclamation and adopting the resolution.

On February 23, 2023, a string of severe winter storms began impacting Fresno County, resulting in the damage and subsequent limited access of County and State roads. Ingress and egress for residents in the mountain and foothill communities of Fresno County are compromised due to record rain and snowfall, affecting multiple roads. The extraordinary amount of snow has overwhelmed available local resources and limited the ability of County road maintenance and operations to rapidly mitigate conditions. Forecasted weather, including subfreezing temperatures, additional rain and snowfall will continue to threaten impacted areas of Fresno County. The uncontrolled snow-melt and run-off from historic snow amounts will

overwhelm water drainage systems and established watersheds, which will lead to flash flooding, rockfall, mudslides, debris flows, and damages to roadways.

Additionally, the current severe weather has worsened conditions of peril to life and property from a previous Local Emergency that was proclaimed on January 9, 2023 for storms that began in December 2022. Residents of the mountain and foothill communities have been asked to shelter in place or evacuate in some areas due to long-term power outages and snow impacted roads. As result of the long-term power outages, Fresno County has set up shelters in the City of Reedley and in the community of Prather. Given the time that has passed between storm events, a new Proclamation of Local Emergency is required in order to seek the appropriate public assistance from the State and Federal agencies.

County Ordinance, Chapter 2.44 requires your Board to review the need to continue the local emergency at least once every 60 days until terminated. The local emergency must be terminated at the earliest possible date when conditions warranting the proclamation have ended.

REFERENCE MATERIAL:

- BAI #19, February 6, 2024
- BAI #25, December 12, 2023
- BAI #41, November 7, 2023
- BAI #34, September 19, 2023
- BAI #25, August 8, 2023
- BAI #35, June 20, 2023
- BAI #21, April 25, 2023

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

On file with Clerk - Resolution

CAO ANALYST:

Ronald Alexander