Legislation Text

File #: 21-0898, **Version:** 1

DATE: October 5, 2021

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Jean M. Rousseau, County Administrative Officer/Emergency Services Director

SUBJECT: Continuation of the Severe Drought Local Emergency Status in Fresno County

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Adopt Resolution proclaiming continuation of the local emergency status relating to the Severe Drought and request that the Governor provide resources and support to mitigate and recover from the drought.

Approval of the recommended action will ensure 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 the individuals, businesses, public and private 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.

DISCUSSION:

Pursuant to Government Code (GC), §8630 and County Ordinance, Chapter 2.44, the Fresno County Emergency Services Director proclaimed the existence of a local emergency due to severe drought. On May 4, 2021, the Board confirmed the proclamation of a local emergency by ratifying the proclamation and adopting resolution No. 21-126. 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. On July 8, 2021, the Governor included nine additional counties in his drought proclamation, increasing the total to 50 counties across the State.

County of Fresno farming communities, already severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and accompanying economic downturn, will incur additional severe economic hardship related to lost agricultural production due to the drought. Surface water supply constraints create a demonstrable and unsustainable increase in demand for groundwater, which is likely to cause additional dry wells for community water systems, private domestic wells, and agricultural wells. It is anticipated that the need for drilling of new wells and the availability of drilling contractors may cause homeowners and farmers to go an extended amount of time without water to their homes and crops while they wait for new wells to be drilled. Water delivery reductions to agriculture are so significant that it has caused County of Fresno farmers to idle thousands of acres of crop land and divert all available water to keep permanent crops alive. The current long-term ramifications of the current drought will have a significant negative impact on the County of Fresno and pose a danger to the

health and welfare of its residents. Previous drought conditions have led to significant tree mortality and aided in the devastation of the Creek Fire, which was the largest single fire in the State's history at the time.

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. On August 10, 2021, your Board adopted a Resolution proclaiming continuation of the local emergency status. The local emergency must be terminated at the earliest possible date when conditions warranting the proclamation have ended.

REFERENCE MATERIAL:

BAI #25, August 10, 2021

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

On file with Clerk - Resolution

CAO ANALYST:

Ron Alexander