



County of Monterey

Item No.

Board Report

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Legistar File Number: RES 24-050

March 26, 2024

Introduced: 3/14/2024

Current Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Matter Type: BoS Resolution

Adopt a resolution continuing for an additional sixty (60) days, the Proclamation of a Local Emergency for the 2023 March Winter Storms and Atmospheric River Event that started on March 9, 2023.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

Adopt a resolution continuing for an additional sixty (60) days, the Proclamation of a Local Emergency for the 2023 March Winter Storms and Atmospheric River Event that started on March 9, 2023.

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

An atmospheric river event carried rain across Monterey County beginning on March 9, 2023, which caused widespread localized flooding and power outages across the County, and major flooding along the Salinas and Pajaro rivers, which flooded residential communities, agricultural fields, and critical infrastructure. These storm events occurred just shortly after the January events which further depleted the County's already strained resources from the major flood fighting and emergency response operations; the County is still in the middle of recovery.

A Local Emergency was Proclaimed by the County Administrative Officer on March 9, 2023, and ratified by the Board of Supervisors on March 14, 2023. The Board further ratified the proclamation on May 9, 2023, June 27, 2023, August 22, 2023, October 17, 2023, December 5, 2023, and January 30, 2024.

Pursuant to California Government Code section 8630, subdivision (a), and Monterey County Code section 2.68.025 the County Administrative Officer may proclaim the existence of a local emergency when the county is affected by or likely to be affected by a public calamity. The Government Code requires that an emergency proclamation be ratified by the Board of Supervisors within 7 days of its issuance and be reviewed at least once every 60 days until the emergency is terminated.

The heavy rain and impacts to watersheds and overwhelming waterways, resulted in a breach of the Pajaro Levee on March 10, 2023. This breach led to life-threatening flooding across the community of Pajaro and caused more than 3,000 residents-many of them low-income families-to evacuate their homes.

During the March event, the massive amount of precipitation overwhelmed the watershed and waterways brought by the atmospheric river caused a breach of the Pajaro River Levee which has caused flooding of the entire town of Pajaro along with wide swaths of agricultural land. Approximately 3,000 residents were displaced and approximately 300 people were rescued from the flood waters.

Approximately 250 residential structures were damaged or destroyed by the flood, in addition to major damage to the local middle school and 80 commercial structures. While the damage assessments concluded around 250 homes with major damage or destroyed, it is important to note that the impacts to the community far exceed the reported numbers. Nearly every home in Pajaro has been impacted.

Many residences are likely to remain uninhabitable for a significant amount of time while debris removal and repairs are conducted. As such, census counts at the emergency shelter which remains open, have remained consistently high, as it was hazardous for community members to remain in their homes or renters are unable to return home.

The series of atmospheric river events of March 2023 resulted in a Federal Disaster Declaration, as well as state, county, and local emergency proclamations.

Since March 9, 2023, the conditions warranting and necessitating the initial proclamation of the existence of a local emergency have not been resolved and immediate action continues to be necessary to mitigate the effects of the local emergency. Therefore, an extension of the Proclamation of the Local Emergency is being requested and would last another sixty (60) days from the date of its ratification.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Numerous County departments and other agencies have participated in the response to the emergency including the Department of Emergency Management, Sheriff's Office, Information Technology Department, Department of Social Services, Health Department, County Administrative Office, Public Works, Facilities, and Parks Department, County Counsel's Office, the US Army Corps of Engineers, NOAA-National Marine Fisheries Service, US Fish and Wildlife Services, CA Dept of Fish and Wildlife, CA Coastal Commission, and the Water Resources Agency.

FINANCING:

The Finance Section of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has been activated and continues to compile costs associated with response and recovery related to this emergency. The costs and the impacts to the County have been presented and will continue to be evaluated and presented under separate financial reports and request for funding augmentations to the Board by the EOC Finance Section.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

- Economic Development
- Administration
- Health & Human Services

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Infrastructure

Public Safety

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Nick Chiulos

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Attachments:

Attachment A: Draft Resolution