

PROCLAMATION OF A LOCAL EMERGENCY

In the Matter of Proclaiming the Existence)
of a Local Emergency within Monterey County)

WHEREAS on March 5, 2021, the U.S. Department of Agriculture issued a Drought Disaster Designation for all 58 California counties; and,

WHEREAS the Governor of the State of California, on May 10, 2021, proclaimed that a State of Emergency in the State of California exists due to Drought conditions; and,

WHEREAS the County of Monterey was included in the Governors proclamation dated May 10, 2021; and,

WHEREAS on May 10, 2021, the U.S. Department of Agriculture granted a secretarial disaster designation for the primary counties of Monterey, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and the contiguous counties of Fresno, Kern, Kings, Merced, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and Ventura due to drought intensity levels of D2 (for 8 consecutive weeks), D3 and D4 as reported by the U.S. Drought Monitor; and,

WHEREAS the State of California and the County of Monterey are experiencing record dry conditions, with 2021 projected to become the one of the driest years on record; and,

WHEREAS the state's water supplies have dipped to alarming levels, indicated by; snowpack in California's mountains is less than 20 percent of the normal average for this date; Monterey County's largest water reservoirs have very low water levels for this time of year, Nacimiento is 12% of capacity and San Antonio is 7% of capacity); Monterey County's major river systems, including the Salinas and Pajaro rivers, have significantly reduced surface water flows; and groundwater levels throughout the state have dropped significantly; and,

WHEREAS dry conditions and lack of precipitation present urgent problems: drinking water supplies are at risk in Monterey County and many California communities; fewer crops can be cultivated and farmers' long-term investments are put at risk; low-income communities heavily dependent on agricultural employment will suffer heightened unemployment and economic hardship; animals and plants that rely on Monterey County and California's rivers, including many species in danger of extinction, will be threatened; and the risk of wildfires across County and the state is greatly increased; and,

WHEREAS extremely dry conditions have persisted since 2018 and may continue beyond this year and more regularly into the future, based on scientific projections regarding the impact of climate change on California's snowpack; and,

WHEREAS climate change is intensifying the impacts of droughts on our communities, environment, and economy, and California is in a second consecutive year of dry conditions, resulting in drought in all parts of the State and extreme or exceptional drought in most of the state; and,

WHEREAS it is necessary to expeditiously mitigate the effects of the drought conditions to ensure the protection of health, safety, and the environment; and,

WHEREAS climate change has significantly increased the intensity and frequency of wildfires in Monterey County and the entire State of California that the drought has magnified, including lower amounts of water for firefighting; and,

WHEREAS without significant reservoir inflows in the coming winter, 2022 will likely see early curtailment of releases, or possibly the inability to make any releases next year to recharge the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin. This is likely to result in declining groundwater levels in the southern Salinas Valley which may affect the operation of wells; and,

WHEREAS the magnitude of the severe drought conditions presents threats beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment, and facilities of any single local government and require the combined forces of a mutual aid region or regions to combat; and

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS PROCLAIMED AS FOLLOWS:

1. A local emergency, as defined in Government Section 8558c and Public Contract Code Section 1102, now exists throughout the County of Monterey.
2. During the existence of said local emergency the powers, functions, and duties of the County Administrative Officer, or designee, and the Emergency Organization of Monterey County shall be those prescribed by State law and the ordinances, resolutions, and approved plans of the County of Monterey in order to mitigate the effects of the local emergency.
3. Pursuant to Public Contract Code Sections 20134, 22050, and 20395, County Administrative Officer, or designee, and the Director of Public Works Facilities & Parks, or designee are hereby authorized to engage independent contractors to complete all necessary work to mitigate the effects of said local emergency. Contracts for this work may be executed without prior Board approval of the plans, specifications, and working details, without giving notice for bids to let contracts.
4. The County Administrative Officer, or designee, is hereby designated as the authorized representative for public and individual assistance of the County of Monterey for the purpose of receipt, processing, and coordination of all inquiries and requirements necessary to obtain available state and federal assistance.
5. The Board of Supervisors of the Monterey County Water Resources Agency is requested to delegate to the Agency's General Manager the emergency authority set forth in Public Contract Code Section 21121.
6. The Board of Supervisors shall review the need for continuing the local emergency at least once every sixty days until the local emergency is terminated.
7. The repair work is statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guideline Section 15269(c) for emergency projects.

SIGNED AND SUBSCRIBED at Salinas, California this 26th day of October 2021.

Wendy R. Askew, Chair
Monterey County Board of Supervisors