



# County of Monterey

Item No.

## Board Report

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

Legistar File Number: 25-048

January 21, 2025

**Introduced:** 1/17/2025

**Current Status:** Agenda Ready

**Version:** 1

**Matter Type:** General Agenda Item

Adopt a resolution to ratify the Proclamation of Local Emergency issued by the County Administrative Officer or designee on January 17, 2025, related to the Vistra Energy fire at the Moss Landing Power Plant that started on January 16, 2025, causing a large fire including burning of lithium batteries, damage to private property, smoke and potential hazardous fumes, and resulting in evacuation and road closures in the Moss Landing area, thereby causing conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property nearby (4/5ths vote required).

### RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

Adopt a resolution to ratify the Proclamation of Local Emergency issued by the County Administrative Officer or designee on January 17, 2025, related to the Vistra Energy fire at the Moss Landing Power Plant that started on January 16, 2025, causing a large fire including burning of lithium batteries, damage to private property, smoke and potential hazardous fumes, and resulting in evacuation and road closures in the Moss Landing area, thereby causing conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property nearby (4/5ths vote required).

### SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

Pursuant to California Government Code section 8630(a) and Monterey County Code section 2.68.025 the County Administrative Officer or designee 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.

On January 16, 2025, shortly after 3:00 p.m. a fire began at the Vistra Energy (“Vistra”) 300-MW Phase I battery energy storage facility located at the Moss Landing Power Plant. The Vistra operation is one of the largest lithium battery storage facilities in the world and the fire caused the lithium batteries to burn. Local fire officials could not extinguish the fire due to the extreme heat from the multiple lithium batteries burning, and as of January 17th the fire continued burning. On January 16th, the Monterey County Sheriff evacuated approximately 1,200 individuals in the area. Additionally, both northbound and southbound lanes of California State Route 1 (“Highway 1”) were closed at Salinas Road and other local area roads were closed. These road closures have impacted local residents, businesses, and the traveling public. Due to potential hazardous fumes from the fire, County health officials advised residents to stay indoors, keep windows and doors closed, limit outdoor exposure, and turn off ventilation systems. The County of Santa Cruz Public Health officials also asked residents

to stay indoors, close windows and doors, limit outdoor exposure, and turn off ventilation systems overnight. On January 17th the North Monterey County Unified School District closed all of its schools and district offices, and Hartnell College closed its Castroville Education Center. The cause of the fire has not yet been determined, but an investigation will begin once the fire is extinguished.

The aforesaid conditions of extreme peril necessitated the proclamation of a local emergency, which was signed into effect by the County Administrator's Office on January 17, 2025. Ratification and approval of this Proclamation of Local Emergency will provide Board confirmation of, and agreement with, the Proclamation made by the County Administrative Office. This emergency proclamation shall expire 60 days after issuance unless confirmed and extended by the governing body of the County of Monterey.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Numerous County departments and other state and federal agencies have participated in the response to the emergency including the Department of Emergency Management, Sheriff's Office, County Administrative Office, Public Works, Facilities, and Parks, and Housing and Community Development.

FINANCING:

Financial impact to the General Fund currently is unknown.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

Mark a check to the related Board of Supervisors Strategic Initiatives

- Economic Development
- Administration
- Health & Human Services
- Infrastructure
- Public Safety

Prepared/Approved by: Kelly Donlon, Chief Assistant County Counsel, x 5313

Attachments: A - Emergency Proclamation, dated January 17, 2025  
B - Draft Resolution