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September 15, 2015

To: Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Mayor  
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From: Sachi A. Hamai  
Interim Chief Executive Officer

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First District

MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS  
Second District

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Third District

DON KNABE  
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH  
Fifth District

### **PLANNING FOR RAINFALL DUE TO A PREDICTED EL NIÑO EVENT (ITEM NO. 40-B, AUGUST 18, 2015)**

On August 18, 2015, a motion by Supervisors Solis and Antonovich directed the Interim Chief Executive Officer, the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), in coordination with the Director of Public Works and the Fire Chief to report back on the following:

1. An outline of an emergency response program that includes all relevant County departments in preparing, responding, and recovering from the predicted El Niño event;
2. The status of capacity at the County's flood control facilities and readiness of the County's spreading grounds to capture storm water to replenish groundwater basins;
3. A fire preparedness and response plan since El Niño events can lead to wildfires and mudslides; and
4. An outline of a comprehensive communication plan to keep the public and other agencies informed using multi-lingual One Voice Messaging.

*"To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service"*

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## **Background**

El Niño describes a weather condition over the tropical part of the Pacific Ocean that has the potential to disrupt weather and climate conditions around the globe. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has indicated that predicting how strong this El Niño could become, and the resulting rainfall total for the West Coast, is difficult.

One possibility is that this El Niño could fuel storm systems that bring above average seasonal rainfall to southwestern California while northern parts of California receive only average seasonal total amounts. Should Los Angeles County receive above average rainfall totals this winter, it will not erase the severe drought conditions resulting from the previous four years of below average rainfall.

The ongoing drought continues to intensify the wildfire threat that annually exists in late summer/early fall. Wildfire burn scars created by new fires, coupled with pre-existing burn scars from the last five years, are vulnerable to mudslides and debris flows from winter storms, especially if multiple storms arrive in close succession.

## **Los Angeles County Operational Area Readiness**

A 1993 California law established the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS), which mandates the manner in which local governments organize their response to disasters. A destructive wildfire or storm event will likely impact more than one local government, so SEMS provides a framework for inter-agency coordination and communication. Under SEMS, the Operational Area includes all 88 cities, the unincorporated communities, and special districts within the County.

As the agency designated to serve as the day-to-day Operational Area Coordinator, OEM facilitates ongoing planning and preparedness activities for the Operational Area. As an example, OEM will convene a Los Angeles Operational Area Weather Preparedness Webinar on September 17, 2015. This webinar features subject matter experts from NOAA, the County Departments of Sheriff, Fire, Public Works, Beaches and Harbors, and Los Angeles County Vector Control District, and is designed to educate and inform a wide cross section of the emergency preparedness and response community.

Additionally, OEM continues to ensure 24/7 readiness of the County's Emergency Operations Center (CEOC) located in East Los Angeles. The CEOC is ready to activate for strategic decision making and other emergency coordination matters during a widespread emergency.

### **Los Angeles County Department Readiness**

Please refer to the attached report which covers in detail the items requested in the August 18, 2015, Board motion.

### **Conclusion**

The County Departments, especially the key public safety and emergency management departments (Sheriff, Fire, Public Health, Public Works, and OEM) remain committed to carrying out an effective unity of effort during the coming wildfire and storm season. This includes utilizing a unified command structure, when a particular incident warrants it, in order to ensure:

- The safety of first responders and the community.
- The protection of the environment and property
- The achievement of tactical objectives.
- The efficient use of resources.

The County's Flood Control District is well positioned to capture storm water for the purpose of replenishing local water supplies and prior to the onset of the winter storms will have completed all necessary debris control preparedness actions.

A multi-lingual One Voice Messaging initiative is underway to improve the delivery of timely, accurate, and reliable information to the public on what they can do before, during, and after this year's wildfire and storm season.

Although this report focuses on the threat of wildfires and severe winter weather, it is prudent to practice a year round, all hazards, all risk approach to preparedness. With this in mind, the Office of Emergency Management has prepared a Scroll and Proclamation for adoption by the Board of Supervisors in recognition of September as National Preparedness Month. This recognition of National Preparedness Month by the Board of Supervisors serves to further emphasize the importance of all residents completing and practicing their family disaster plans.

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If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me, or your staff may contact Jeff L. Reeb at (323) 980-2261, or via email at [jreeb@ceooem.lacounty.gov](mailto:jreeb@ceooem.lacounty.gov).

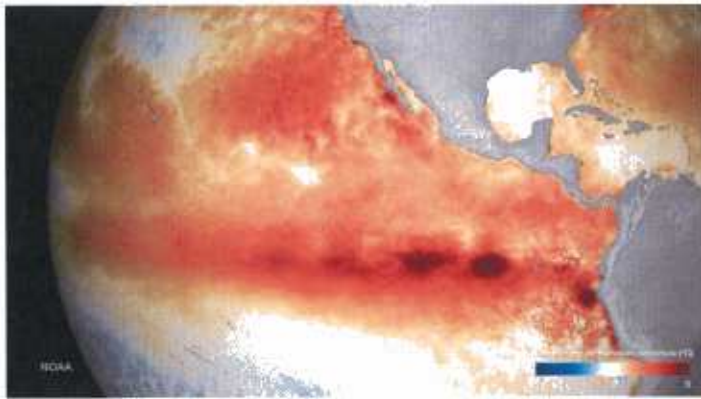
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#### Attachments

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors  
County Counsel  
Fire  
Public Works  
Public Health  
Sheriff

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# PLANNING FOR RAINFALL DUE TO A PREDICTED EL NIÑO EVENT SEPTEMBER 2015



Sources: @NOAA @LAPublicWorks @LACo\_FD

# Planning For Rainfall Due To a Predicted El Niño Event

September 2015

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## ITEM 1

### Outline of an emergency response program that includes all relevant County Departments in preparing, responding and recovering from the predicted El Niño event

#### Summary

Emergency Management is made up of the following phases:



For the predicted El Niño event, the County is concurrently in the Mitigation and Preparedness phase. Examples of ongoing mitigation efforts include the Department of Public Works renovation of their flood control features, the Department of Public Health's Ocean Monitoring program and the County Fire Department's vegetation management, reforestation, and land rehabilitation program.

This report will further detail out the **preparedness, response, and recovery** phases by highlighting the efforts of individual departments.

All first responder County Departments closely monitor the weather reports that are issued by the National Weather Service (NWS). Depending on the forecast, various levels of readiness are triggered.

#### Outline of an Emergency Response Program – By Department **PREPAREDNESS** (Before a rain event)

##### **Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management (OEM)**

If the NWS advises that an upcoming storm in the County is forecast to be significant – for example, that it will have high rainfall intensity and/or threat of mudslides in hillside areas, then:

- OEM will establish an Operational Area Severe Weather Conference Call with County departments, independent city representatives and response and recovery partners. These calls will commence before the storm strikes,



and continue through the response and recovery phase as dictated by the incident.

- Basic notification group messages will be sent by the OEM Duty Officer which will include the following element(s):
  - Weather forecast
  - Countywide common operational picture
  - Individual jurisdictional needs
  - Activation of emergency operation centers
  - Status of evacuations
  - Shelter operational status
  - Animal shelters operational status
  - Emergency Proclamations
  - Additional pertinent information as dictated by events

### **Los Angeles County Fire Department (Fire Department)**

The Fire Department provides fire protection and life safety services to 58 cities and the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County. The Fire Department provides services to over 4 million residents and as well as protecting thousands of acres of watershed. The Fire Department takes a comprehensive approach in its emergency preparedness planning for winter storms and related floods and debris flows. This includes a pro-active approach and ongoing communication with their staff, their assisting agencies, and the general public by addressing the following:

- Public education about swiftwater and mud/debris flow through pre-identified burned and prone areas through our local fire personnel and the media.
- Daily monitoring of weather and early identification of required staffing.
- Pre-season training to include swiftwater training, validation of proper equipment, safety messaging to employees, and ensuring operational readiness.
- Pre-deployment of sand and sandbags at fire stations and other fire department administrative sites.

Operational readiness will be augmented in advance of adverse weather by pre-deploying additional resources, such as swift water teams and helicopters, to provide quick transportation and support rescue operations.

### **Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (Public Works)**

See **ITEM 2** in this report for status of the flood control system that is maintained by Public Works.

Public Works, through its function of the Los Angeles County Waterworks Districts (LACWD), provides water service to approximately 240,000 people in five Districts throughout Los Angeles County, including areas in the Antelope Valley, Acton, Kagel Canyon, Malibu/Topanga, Rancho Dominguez Water System, and Val Verde. In addition, LACWD also operates and maintains the Marina Del Rey Water System on behalf of the

Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors and manages the water quality programs for the City of Lomita and Peter J. Pitchess Honor Rancho water systems. The LACWD has an Emergency Response Plan that covers storm events. Based on inspection, the following is the status of the Waterworks Districts infrastructure:

- 88 Pump Stations and Well Sites were inspected and found to be storm ready.
- 32 potentially storm vulnerable water reservoir sites were inspected and access was found to be in need of repair. The repairs will be completed prior to the storm season.

Public Works anticipates certain conditions to affect the transportation network that includes:

- Rockslides and sloughing from hillsides adjacent to County-maintained roadways, potentially causing full or partial road closures.
- Impacts to road shoulders, and clogged road drains.
- Fallen tree branches impacting pedestrian and vehicular travel.
- Light mudflows causing unsafe driving conditions on rural and mountain roads.
- Potential moderate mudflows in areas near recent wildfires.
- Power outages at County-maintained traffic signals and Public Works' yards and buildings.

To prepare for these anticipated adverse conditions, Public Works has been and will continue to do the following:

- Inspecting roadway culverts and clearing inlet areas of rocks, vegetation, and dirt to ensure storm runoff can be adequately drained from the roadways.
- Inspecting road drains to ensure riprap and other protections are in place to avoid the possibility of roadways being washed out due to heavy runoff.
- Preparation to close roadways as necessary when conditions warrant, or as requested by the California Highway Patrol (CHP).
- Clearing road shoulders to remove debris, rocks, and vegetation in order to allow for proper drainage of storm runoff into road drains.
- Clearing trash racks and areas behind K-rails in areas that were affected by recent wildfires.
- Pre-position heavy equipment near areas that are likely to sustain mudflows, such as those affected by recent wildfires.
- Reviewing procedures for assembling a Bailey Bridge when needed to replace certain bridges during emergencies.
- Ensuring that as-needed emergency contracts are ready to be used for services such as tree trimming, debris removal, and haul trucks.
- Reviewing procedures for documenting storm damage in order to properly apply for disaster relief.
- Conducting pre-storm checks of the electrical systems at Public Works' flood maintenance facilities.
- Conducting functionality tests of mobile portable electrical generators and emergency road closure equipment.

- Maintaining an ample stock of road barricades, road signs, sandbags, road cones, hand tools, chainsaw blades, stop signs and others emergency devices.

### **The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (Sheriff's Department)**

In advance of storm season, the Sheriff's Department will:

- Review Emergency Operations Procedures, EOP 3-6, Storm and Mud-Flow Warnings along with Wildfire Procedures to be conducted during in-service briefings for all patrol personnel.
- Perform the annual inspection of each patrol unit to ensure Wildfire/Storm and Mud-Flow Supplemental Emergency Plans are in place.
- Distribute hazard maps (when applicable) to patrol stations of burn areas and potential flood/mud flow locations to include critical infrastructure checklists.
- Distribute Emergency Connex Boxes to each patrol unit containing MRE's (Meals Ready to Eat) sleeping bags and other emergency supplies.
- Distribute sandbags to each patrol unit for public distribution.
- Coordinate with other County Departments and mutual aid cities for collective public information dissemination via Alert LA County and social media.
- Coordinate with mutual aid agencies for resources and assistance.

### **Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation**

In anticipation of the upcoming El Niño season, the Department of Parks and Recreation has done or is planning to do facility inspections which include the following:

- Cleaning of roof drains, storm drains and catch basins.
- Assessing the integrity of roofs, rain gutters.
- Evaluating areas and placing sand bags as needed.
- Training the staff to recognize trees stressed by drought which may be more prone to falling during a storm. Maintaining, removing and/or lifting the trees when needed.

### **Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors**

There are 16 protective sand berms built to protect County property that is along coastal areas of Malibu, Venice Beach, Dockweiler Beach and Hermosa Beach. Additionally, full sandbags are offered to the public at six maintenance yards: Zuma Beach, Will Rogers Beach, Venice Beach, Dockweiler Beach, Manhattan Beach, and Torrance Beach. Lastly, many Lifeguard towers are pulled back away from the coastline to avoid damage during high coastal surge events that often accompany a storm system.

## **Outline of an Emergency Response Program**

### **RESPONSE (During a rain event)**

#### **Office of Emergency Management**

Monitor for damages within the unincorporated areas and coordinate any damage information reports received from the cities. This includes:

- High risk areas in conjunction with cities.
- Adjust the County Emergency Operation Center activation level based on rain events or number of cities activating their Emergency Operation Centers.
- Activate the Operational Area Reporting and Recovery System (OARRS) computer based application so that all governmental partners are communicating operational status through a common operating protocol
- Assist in the coordination of mutual aid requests throughout the County.
- Communicate with the Governor's Office of Emergency Services for any assistance needed within the County and to report out the County's status
- Monitor all County department's responses to any rain event activities.
- Coordinate with the Auditor Controller's Office to set up tracking numbers to capture all costs associated with each rain event.
- Provide ongoing situational updates via the Basic Notification Group reporting system.

#### **All Departments**

Will follow Statewide Emergency Management System (SEMS) protocols when acting as a first responder to damage caused by severe rain events.

- At the field response level this means ensuring that there is a command element of appropriate authority (incident commander or unified command if conditions warrant) in order to carry out tactical decisions. A standardized command structure and process utilizing the National Incident Management System (NIMS) will be used to direct personnel and resources in order to protect life, property and the environment, and maintain control and support continued operations of government.

#### **Los Angeles County Fire Department (Fire Department)**

##### *Response/Mitigation*

The Fire Department provides a robust response to both swiftwater and/or mud and debris flow incidents. All firefighters and lifeguard personnel have been trained in basic swiftwater training. In addition, the Fire Department deploys highly trained personnel and response vehicles that are capable of providing technical rescue assistance. Additionally, the Fire Department routinely uses heavy equipment (dozers primarily) and Fire Suppression hand crews to facilitate the filling of sandbags, mud/debris removal, and overall manpower.

During rain events the Fire Department routinely patrols and monitors the flood prone and burned areas within its jurisdiction.

In the event of a significant event the Fire Department routinely activates one of their three all-hazard Incident Management Teams (IMT), staffed with 45 personnel, to effectively lead/manage such an incident. Generally, the IMT will be a unified incident command with law enforcement and Public Works.

### **Public Health (Public Health)**

Public Health has a thorough El Niño response work plan which provides for Public Information, Disease Surveillance, Environmental Health, Community Health, Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response, and Veterinary Public Health (see attached El Niño Response Activities report).

### **The Sheriff's Department will:**

- Direct traffic and effect road closures.
- Conduct evacuations.
- Provide security for road closures and evacuated areas.
- Deploy Aero Bureau specialized teams for wildfire suppression, swift-water rescues, and search and rescue operations.
- Deploy Search and Rescue teams in canyon and mountain areas.

### **Public Works will:**

- Quickly mobilize to restore infrastructure it maintains (roads, waterworks facilities, flood control facilities, etc.) to safe conditions.
- Close roads as necessary when storm conditions warrant, or as requested by the CHP or Sheriff.
- Patrol rural or mountain roads and push fallen rocks and mudflows to the side of the road as necessary.
- In urban areas where there is a high number of downed tree limbs, crews are deployed to cut the limbs and push them to the side of the road to avoid impacts to pedestrian and vehicular traffic.
- Monitor localized flooding and mudflows, especially in rural areas and mountain roadways, and take corrective measures as necessary.

## **Outline of an Emergency Response Program** **RECOVERY**

Restore services or infrastructure to pre-event condition

- If a storm event creates significant damage in the region:



- OEM will collect Initial Damage Estimates from cities, Special Districts and County departments.
- If damages suffice, the Board of Supervisors may proclaim a local emergency. This may also trigger a request to the Governor for a State of Emergency and to the federal government for a Presidential Declaration.
- If State of Emergency proclaimed, the State and federal financial reimbursement process will be invoked.
- OEM will continue to monitor Operational Area needs and operational recovery and coordination.

## **ITEM 2**

### **Status of capacity at the County's flood control facilities and readiness of the County's spreading grounds to capture storm water to replenish groundwater basins**

#### **Summary**

Public Works performs maintenance activities, including those related to storm season preparation, on a year round basis. The flood control and storm water capture infrastructure is in an overall good state of operational readiness for an above average amount of seasonal rainfall. This system helps replenish the groundwater aquifers which provide approximately one-third of local water supplies.

#### **Background**

Public Works (Public Works) provides sustainable water supplies and healthy watersheds while reducing flood risk for our communities. A substantial part of the necessary infrastructure is an extensive network of dams, debris basins, channels, storm drains, and spreading grounds.

#### **Status of capacity**

##### **14 Major Dams and Reservoirs**

Public Works' major dams are designed for extreme storm events such as the one that occurred in 1938. Every year personnel and facilities are prepared to operate for such events. Successful valve tests for the dams were conducted following the 2014-15 storm season and testing will be completed again prior to the start of the 2015-16 storm season.

Since 2005 Public Works has implemented approximately \$50 million in construction projects to increase dam operational reliability and over \$110 million to increase storm water capture and dam safety. This large capital investment has resulted in a remarkable operational readiness of the flood control system to reduce flood risk for the communities of Los Angeles County and to improve storm water capture and groundwater recharge for local sustainable water supply.



Dam infrastructure improvements for reliability have included replacing/upgrading electrical and mechanical systems and inlet/outlet works consisting of gates, valves, and controls, which enable more effective and efficient dam operations. Dam safety improvements have included rehabilitating dam structures to meet current State seismic and spillway standards. These standards require the dams to safely withstand a Maximum Credible Earthquake (the largest magnitude earthquake geologists consider possible for the nearby faults which could affect the dam) and to safely pass a Probable Maximum Flood (the most intense conceivable storm event – considered to occur only once in 10,000 years). With the major dams being constructed in the 1920's and 1930's, their designs had limited seismic considerations and smaller spillways than currently required. Consequently, the amount of storm water that could be captured and held in the reservoirs was restricted for safety reasons. Upgrading the seismic safety of the major dams has allowed for the removal of mandated operational restrictions and increased the storm water capture capacity of the reservoirs.

All of Public Works' 14 major dams are fully operational. Valve systems have been upgraded and/or refurbished, and all maintenance work has been completed. All 14 dams have been certified by the State and are ready for the upcoming storm season to store and conserve water. Current capacity and status of Public Works' 14 major dams is as follows:

11 Dams

**(Big Dalton, Big Tujunga, Cogswell, Devil's Gate, Eaton Wash, Live Oak, Pacoima, Puddingstone Diversion, San Dimas, San Gabriel, Thompson Creek):** Certified by State for full reservoir storage

Storm Valve Capacity: 100%

Spillway Capacity: Able to pass the probable maximum flood event

1 Dam

**Morris Dam:** Certified by State for full reservoir storage

Storm Valve Capacity: 84%

Spillway Capacity: Able to pass the probable maximum flood event

1 Dam

**Puddingstone Dam:** Restricted to hold 45% of reservoir capacity for long-term storage.

Storm Valve Capacity: 100%

Spillway Capacity: Able to pass the probable maximum flood event

1 Dam

**Santa Anita Dam:** Certified by State for temporary full reservoir storage during storm events

Storm Valve Capacity: 100%

Spillway Capacity: Spillway upgrade scheduled for 2017

## **Reservoir Sediment**

Sediment accumulation in the reservoirs behind dams reduces the available capacity for storm water capture. Very high depths of sediment at the face of dams could threaten to clog the dam outlet works needed for flood control operations and for release of captured storm water to send to downstream spreading. Sediment accumulation in the reservoirs increases during large storm events especially when the watershed has burned debris (after a wildfire) that becomes part of the flow. For example, sediment inflow to reservoirs located below the burn area of the 2009 Station Fire has resulted in planned sediment removal projects at Devil's Gate, Pacoima, Big Tujunga, and Cogswell Dams.

In the interim, at Pacoima, Big Tujunga Dam, and Cogswell Dams a higher than normal reservoir pool will be maintained to help sediment inflows settle in the reservoir away from the face of the dams. Additionally, in the interim, at Devil's Gate Dam, protective measures have been implemented including extending the steel trash racks that prevent the flood protection valves from plugging, installing new boom logs to block floating debris, adding maintenance platforms to keep spillway openings clear, and annual removal of accumulated sediment immediately in front of the dam. A flood Hazard Warning Plan was also put in place that involves notification of the public safety agencies for any areas of potential flooding along the Arroyo Seco Channel.

During storm season, Public Works will carefully monitor the sediment levels near the outlet valves of all of the 14 major dams and take actions to clear them as necessary.

## **Other Flood Control Infrastructure**

- 64 miles of Earth Bottom Channels: Vegetation maintenance on these reaches typically starts after the bird nesting season which ends on September 1, 2015. Most clearing operations are expected to be completed by November 30, 2015
- 417 miles of concrete channels will be inspected prior to storm season.
- 3,331 miles of underground storm drains are functioning properly.
- 81,765 Catch Basins will be cleaned out by November 15, 2015.
- Routine maintenance at 46 pump stations are planned to be completed by October 31, 2015. One pump station is undergoing repair and will be ready by November 15, 2015.
- Routine maintenance at all 172 debris basins are planned to be completed by October 31, 2015.
  - 166 debris basins are located below un-burned watersheds. All are below 25% full and ready.
  - 5 debris basins located below the Colby fire are less than 5 % full.
  - Sediment in one debris basin located below the Calgrove fire is planned to be cleared by October 31, 2015. Several Rail & Timber structures downstream of burn areas are also planned to be constructed by October 31, 2015.
- 328 Debris Retaining Structures will be cleaned out by October 31, 2015.

- The 27 spreading grounds have all been cleared of vegetation and are ready for storm water capture.

### **Readiness of Spreading Grounds to Replenish Groundwater Basins**

Public Works monitors storm events 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Weather forecasts from the National Weather Service and a weather forecasting consultant are utilized to prepare for incoming storms. Once rainfall has started and runoff in the rivers and channels is detected, staff are activated and report to flood control and storm water capture facilities. Based on this data, operations of the dams and spreading grounds are directed to reduce flood risk to downstream communities, while also maximizing the amount of storm water captured to replenish our water supplies.

Field crews and office staff operate 27 spreading grounds throughout the County to capture and replenish the maximum amount of storm water possible. Public Works coordinates its efforts with the United States Army Corps of Engineers to release water from their reservoirs to conserve water when not in flood control-mode. Public Works also releases water from its own reservoirs in the same manner.

Public Works captures and recharges an average of 200,000 acre feet (65 billion gallons) of storm water each year. The most recent strong El Niño event occurred in 1997-98. That year, Public Works captured and recharged 366,000 acre feet (119 billion gallons) of local storm water. The 2004-05 El Niño storm season was not characterized as a "strong El Niño" however it resulted in record rainfall (over 40 inches of precipitation in downtown Los Angeles) and Public Works captured and recharged over 600,000 acre-feet (195 billion gallons) of local storm water.

In addition to the capital improvements at dams to increase their water conservation capabilities, Public Works has completed 22 storm water recharge projects at a cost of \$37 million since 2007, which combined, increased the spreading grounds storage capacity by 2,190 acre feet, which will increase the average annual water conserved by 19,770 acre feet (6.5 billion gallons). Fifteen additional projects are planned over the next 5 years that will continue the expansion of our groundwater recharge system by increasing storage by over 3,000 acre feet and will conserve over 13,000 acre feet (4.2 billion gallons) of additional storm water annually.

### **ITEM 3**

**A fire preparedness and response plan since El Niño events can lead to wildfires and mudslides**

#### **Summary**

The Fire Department takes a comprehensive approach in its emergency preparedness planning when responding to wildfires. This same approach is being utilized as we continue to plan for the El Niño event. Following a wildfire within the many urban interface

areas of the County, there is a heightened concern that storms can bring mudslides. Therefore, the Fire Department is committed to a pro-active approach and ongoing communication with its staff, its assisting agencies, and the general public due to the threat of wildfires this season.

## **Background**

The mission of the Fire Department is to protect lives, the environment, and property by providing prompt, skillful, and cost-effective fire protection and life safety services.

## **Fire preparedness and response plan**

### **Preparedness**

The Fire Department is in continuous collaboration with other fire agencies throughout the region in order to pre-plan coordination of resources, communications, and operating plans. This ensures a coordinated multi-agency wildfire suppression response.

The Fire Department's Forestry Division has worked closely with State and Federal agencies to coordinate vegetation management, re-forestation, and land rehabilitation to decrease the impact of fires and subsequent mudslides. In addition, working closely with the County of Los Angeles Department of Agricultural Commissioner/Weights and Measures, the Fire Department implements the Brush Clearance Program. This measure creates "Defensible Space" on properties by removing the most flammable plants, while maintaining other deep-rooted species that will hold soil in place and decrease erosion when excessive rainfall is received. This year alone, there have been over 40,000 inspections conducted.

The Fire Chief and his executive team routinely communicate on the predicted fire season highlighting the importance of training and preparedness. Through the Fire Departments 9 field divisions, important fire safety and preparedness messaging occurs. The assistant fire chiefs, community services representatives, and field personnel take every opportunity to remind the community about the importance of wildfire preparedness and how to take the necessary actions before and during a wildfire. During community events, emergency preparedness fairs, and via social media, the Fire Department's emphasis is on making the public aware of the "Ready Set Go! Personal Wildfire Action Plan," which provides guidance to residents in preparation and planning in order to be well prepared in the event of a wild land fire.

Lastly, the Fire Department annually holds a series of live-fire trainings to ensure that their personnel maintain the proper level of skills and knowledge to effectively respond to a wildfire.



## Response

The Fire Department ensures that it receives the latest and most accurate weather forecasts from the NWS. The forecasts are critical in decision-making, since the following steps will generally be taken during periods of high fire danger:

- The Brush Fire Dispatch Matrix is adjusted by increasing the number of resources being automatically dispatched to a brush fire.
- Fire Department operational readiness is ensured by augmenting staff and pre-deploy additional resources to those areas of higher fire danger. This includes the increased air operations capabilities that exist due to contracting additional aircraft, including the SuperScoopers and the Helitanker. The Fire Department has the ability to extend the length of the contracts based on current or forecasted fire activity.

### ITEM 4

#### **An Outline of a Comprehensive El Niño Communication Plan to keep the public and other agencies informed using One Voice Messaging**

### **Background**

In order to keep Los Angeles County residents well-formed and safe before, during and after the El Niño climate event, the CEO's Office of Emergency Management has convened a Public Information Officer (PIO) One Voice Taskforce consisting of the following seven County Departments: CEO, Sheriff, Fire, Public Works, Public Health, Beaches and Harbors, and Parks and Recreation. The CEO's Countywide Communications team has played a key role in this taskforce, articulating strategies that can amplify and further coordinate departments' El Niño-related public safety messages. Over the course of two meetings during August 2015, the PIO One Voice Taskforce has applied its expertise in public communication strategies to develop a flexible and adaptable outline for an El Niño Communication Plan. The following section identifies the guiding principles and specific components of the communication plan agreed upon by the PIO One Voice Taskforce.

### **Communication Plan: Guiding Principles and Outline**

An important first step completed by the taskforce was to identify the following guiding principles for One Voice El Niño public message development and a corresponding communication plan:

- **Timely:** Messages must be released quickly and efficiently, so that the media, public and other agencies receive applicable information and can take appropriate and informed steps;

- **Accurate:** Messages must be coordinated and contain correct information that does not contradict or confuse message recipients;
- **Interactive:** Messages will be enhanced by having interactive web-based tools available for the public's use, such as mapping tools that identify sand-bag distribution sites;
- **Appropriate:** Messages must focus on communicating essential information most relevant to targeted audiences. Careful attention must be paid to ensure information is communicated using plain language principles, and in multiple languages so that messages are accessible to the linguistically diverse residents of Los Angeles County; and
- **Measured:** Strategies to evaluate the efficacy of coordinated One Voice messaging must be developed, applied and analyzed to address improvements that can be made to the message coordination process.

These principles are aligned with Los Angeles County's Emergency Information Plan, an annex to the County's Operational Area Emergency Response Plan that articulates an all-hazard approach to coordinating and releasing public information when the County Emergency Operations Center is activated.

The emergency management phases (Preparedness/Mitigation, Response and Recovery) described in an earlier section of this report will be used as a framework to organize public messages articulated by the forthcoming El Niño Communication Plan. The plan will contain the following essential components:

- **Strategic Objectives:** The plan will clearly articulate the intended communication objectives to be met, per each of the three emergency management phases;
- **Key Audiences:** The development of successful communication strategies is based upon careful analysis of who is the intended audience. Given Los Angeles County's linguistic and cultural diversity, the plan will articulate specific monolingual audiences that will be targeted. Special attention will also be given to identifying subsets of more at-risk and vulnerable audiences, such as individuals who reside in high-risk flooding areas, homeless populations, and those with disabilities, access and functional needs;
- **Targeted Messages:** Consistent, compelling and plain-language messaging that resonates with key audiences is at the heart of successful communication



initiatives. For example, the plan will specify El Niño preparedness messages that will be integrated into relevant County Department's public communications;

- **Timeline:** The plan will include targeted timeframes for the release and dissemination of El Niño communications; and
- **Tactics:** The plan will operationalize how County departments will deliver coordinated messages to key audiences. Social media and interactive tools will be integrated into this section, as well.

Several members of the PIO One Voice Taskforce have emphasized the need to leverage and integrate existing emergency management communication strategies and protocol into its El Niño communication plan development. For example, the development of media/public messages during the Response emergency management phase will follow protocol established by the Incident Command System. Also, Joint Information System/Joint Information Center (JIS/JIC) operating principles from the National Information Management System will inform the communication coordination approaches adopted by the taskforce.

### **Next Steps**

The One Voice PIO Taskforce will continue meeting to finalize an El Niño Communication Plan and determine the corresponding internal procedures needed to coordinate public message development.

CEO's Countywide Communications has taken proactive steps to gather educational and preparedness materials from County departments. This information will be used to populate a special webpage on the [www.lacounty.gov](http://www.lacounty.gov) website that will serve as a unified point for El Niño related public communication efforts.

CEO's Office of Emergency Management has coordinated an El Niño webinar on September 17, 2015, to inform cities and other jurisdictions in the Operational Area of preparedness steps and the County's initiation of One Voice Messaging. OEM has also planned and coordinated a special JIS/JIC training on October 7, 2015. All County departments' PIOs have been invited to attend this training.

## ATTACHMENT

### Los Angeles County Department of Public Health El Niño Response Activities

**Mitigation-** (activities undertaken via legislation, regulation, education, or inspection to minimize damage or destruction. This includes orders to clean drains, channels, ensure protective measures are in place for hazardous situations, or that steps to ensure consumer product safety are in place.).

Task Number	Element	Tasked To
1	Public Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-Event messaging <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Medication Supply</li> <li>○ General Health Messaging</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Public Information Health Education
2	Disease Surveillance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish Baseline Disease Data</li> </ul>	ACDC-EPI
3	Environmental Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide one on-call person as a resource regarding ocean water quality and sewage spills.</li> <li>• Utilize Ocean Monitoring program staff to monitor ocean sites.</li> <li>• Maintain contact with other governmental and non-governmental personnel and provide assistance and expertise once a cross connection in a water system is discovered.</li> <li>• Conduct field evaluation as necessary and conduct emergency resolutions to all failing alternative water systems, especially rainwater catchment projects.</li> <li>• Review the Fire Rebuild policy with all Land Use staff so all are aware that policy applies to homes damaged by mudslides and flooding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Drinking Water (elements 6, 7)</li> <li>○ Cross Connection (elements 3,4)</li> <li>○ Recreational Water (elements 1,2)</li> <li>○ Land Use (element 5)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Food <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Wholesale Food &amp; Safety (element 8)</li> <li>○ Specialized Food Services (element 9)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Task Number	Element	Tasked To
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notify water well owners, if well was flooded, the water should be tested and disinfected after flood waters recede.</li> <li>• Notify water well owners of the danger of electrical shock and damage to your well or pump (<a href="http://water.ea.ca.gov/drink/info/well/whatdo.cfm">http://water.ea.ca.gov/drink/info/well/whatdo.cfm</a>)</li> <li>• Have staff on stand-by for emergencies (recall &amp; FBI)</li> <li>• Have staff on stand-by to respond to food facility emergencies (no utilities, water damage, etc.).</li> <li>• Place 2 Strike Teams on stand-by in order to avoid fatigue of members</li> <li>• Review Incident Command Structure and populate it with staff ready to respond.</li> <li>• Ensure mitigation measures described in each site's wet weather plans have been or are in the process of being implemented.</li> <li>• Have staff on stand-by to monitor.</li> <li>• Verify and provide ICS / ECC with the number of field staff available to respond to OEM activities (e.g. name, work experience, title/position, contact information, etc.).</li> <li>• Assist with organizing bureau OEM team work schedules.</li> <li>• Assist with organizing field teams and the OEM function and tasks for each.</li> <li>• Assist with the coordination of OEM teams and deployment plans.</li> <li>• Have staff on stand-by to respond to Vector related emergencies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vector (element 18)</li> <li>• Solid Waste (element 12)</li> <li>• Radiation (element 13)</li> <li>• Emergency Prep &amp; Response (elements 10, 11)</li> <li>• District Surveillance and Enforcement – Food &amp; Housing (elements 14, 15, 16, 17)</li> </ul>

Task Number	Element	Tasked To
4	Community Health Services (CHS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Outreach- provide education and information to public on activities to take to minimize damage or destruction.</li> </ul>	CHS
5	Emergency Preparedness and Response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinate, establish and manage emergency management recovery grants</li> </ul>	Emergency Preparedness and Response Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grants and Budgets</li> <li>Emergency Operations</li> <li>Planning and Policy</li> </ul>
6	Veterinary Public Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Information</li> <li>Disease Surveillance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional outreach regarding the impact of El Nino through AHAN (Animal Health Alert Network) messaging to professionals for disease alert and disaster preparedness and response planning</li> <li>Gather baseline animal disease data including West Nile virus data and vector borne diseases.</li> </ul>

**Preparedness-** (the development of plans, acquisition of equipment, review of existing structures, and other activities associated with preparing to respond. This may also include training and exercises)

Task Number	Element	Tasked To
1	Public Information Public Health Messaging efforts based on need identified by Divisions	Public Information
2	Disease Surveillance Increase surveillance in impacted areas	ACDC-EPI
3	Environmental Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide assistance as requested to maintain emergency readiness.</li> <li>• Participate in readiness drills.</li> <li>• Maintain and update alternative water system supervisor contact information and list of alternative water systems per sub-district.</li> <li>• Update materials for the public on the procedures for rebuilding a home with a septic system after a disaster.</li> <li>• Prepare and distribute guidance to DSE on how to respond to complaints of failing septic systems due to ground water saturation of dispersal area.</li> <li>• Advise geologists of requirements for determining high ground water levels and additional monitoring during wet weather.</li> <li>• Provide information to the public regarding issues with water wells during the storm (posting information on our website and e-mailing to the Small Water System Operator, as well as referring to the EPA website).</li> <li>• Check, maintain, repair and replace County EH issued field equipment as necessary.</li> <li>• Strike Teams will check, maintain, repair, and replace field equipment as necessary.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water</li> <li>• Drinking Water (7)</li> <li>• Cross Connection (3)</li> <li>• Recreational Water (1, 2)</li> <li>• Land Use (4, 5, 6)</li> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Wholesale Food &amp; Safety (8)</li> <li>• Specialized Food Services (9)</li> <li>• Housing/shelter (20, 21)</li> <li>• Vector (21)</li> <li>• Solid Waste (13)</li> <li>• Radiation (14)</li> <li>• Emergency Preparedness &amp; Response (10, 11, 12)</li> <li>• District Surveillance &amp; Enforcement - Food &amp; Housing (15, 16, 17, 18, 19)</li> </ul>

Task Number	Element	Tasked To
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare the Emergency Control Center for full operation.</li> <li>• Provide and educate Strike Team and EH staff with awareness of the potential hazards they could encounter in response to flood.</li> <li>• Have staff assigned to active waste disposal and transfer facilities review their sites wet weather plans and review mitigation measures.</li> <li>• If Debris from Fukushima is found on the shore, it will survey the debris and determine if there is a need for special disposal options.</li> <li>• Assure the safety of bureau staff and the integrity / infrastructure of district offices.</li> <li>• Assure required supplies / equipment is sufficient in quantity / type and readily available at district offices; assure staff have access to needed supplies and equipment 24/7.</li> <li>• Verify communication methods and operative working of equipment (e.g. telephones, computers, email and facsimile, etc.).</li> <li>• Develop and submit current BDSE emergency contact / call back lists for ICS, ECC, etc.</li> <li>• Coordinate field responses and provide scheduled updates through ICS / ECC or in accordance with other approved processes.</li> <li>• Have staff ready and available to access and approve temporary housing for the homeless residents during inclement weather.</li> <li>• Check, maintain, repair and replace County EH issued field equipment as necessary.</li> <li>• Have staff available to respond and/or assist EH Emergency Preparedness and response in evaluating emergency shelters.</li> </ul>	
4	<p>Community Health Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with local communities to engage, educate and provide information on emergency preparedness.</li> </ul>	
5	<p>Emergency Preparedness and Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Incident Command Structures.</li> </ul>	Emergency Preparedness and Response Program



Task Number	Element	Tasked To
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Department Level operational plans for:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Flooding</li> <li>○ Mud Slides</li> <li>○ Well Contamination</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Acquire equipment for response forces.</li> <li>• Codify hazards for responders.</li> <li>• Prepare information sharing and situational awareness processes</li> <li>• Develop scientific baseline for response.</li> <li>• Inquire with the CDC Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) Office to determine terms of response funding that may be provided via contingent supplemental emergency response funding.</li> <li>• Identify El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) projected impact and real-time data sources including the California Department of Water Resources, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Administration</li> <li>• Emergency Operations</li> <li>• Planning and Policy</li> </ul>
6	Veterinary Public Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Information</li> <li>• Emergency Preparedness and Response</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute emergency preparedness information to the public through handouts and presentations.</li> <li>• Meet with animal control agencies to review Animal Response Plan.</li> </ul>

**Response-** (activities undertaken when in response to an incident. Such as deployment of personnel, activation of ICS structures, participation in decision making processes, and establishment of field operations.)

Task Number	Element	Tasked To
1	Public Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information as needed to support operations</li> </ul>	Public Information
2	Disease Surveillance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use surveillance data and report anomalies to the Health Officer</li> </ul>	ACDC- EPI
3	Environmental Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respond to ocean water quality incidents including sewage spills.</li> <li>• Conduct emergency resolution to failing or alternative water systems that did not operate per design.</li> <li>• Make the necessary referrals to appropriate programs and agencies once problems are identified.</li> <li>• Expedite plan reviews for homeowners submitting plans under the disaster rebuild policy.</li> <li>• Ensure Drinking Water Program (DWP) develops communication protocols with the public in case of emergency situation associated with existing wells</li> <li>• DWP will coordinate with EPRU in responding to emergency situations associated with water wells</li> <li>• DWP will coordinate with State and Federal agencies in response to emergency situations</li> <li>• DWP should develop a protocol regarding the usage of water wells after the flood</li> <li>• Offer guidance and training to operators.</li> <li>• Deploy staff to survey affected food facilities</li> <li>• Give written orders/instructions to follow until utilities are restored or damage is repaired</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Drinking Water (5, 6, 7, 8)</li> <li>○ Cross Connection (2, 3)</li> <li>○ Recreational Water (1)</li> <li>○ Land Use (4)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Food <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Wholesale Food &amp; Safety (9)</li> <li>○ Specialized Food Services (10, 11, 21)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Housing/shelter</li> <li>• Vector (20)</li> <li>• Solid Waste (14)</li> <li>• Emergency Preparedness &amp; Response (12, 13)</li> <li>• District Surveillance &amp; Enforcement – Food &amp; Housing (15, 16, 17, 18, 19)</li> </ul>

Task Number	Element	Tasked To
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perform tactical response actions related to flooding, mud slides, etc. by the Strike Team</li> <li>Inspection of shelters by Strike Team</li> <li>Conduct inspection of sites to ensure that mitigation measures were implemented and report back on the status of the site</li> <li>Verify safety and readiness of staff; verify safe field conditions exist to perform OEM related duties; validate these safety measures using ICS / ECC systems and processes.</li> <li>Deploy staff to conduct OEM related activities / locations using ICS / ECC priorities.</li> <li>Monitor and assign supplies and equipment using ICS / ECC processes; track usage and submit emergency orders as needed.</li> <li>Assist with evaluating OEM related activities and augment field responses / activities when needed; use implemented procedures to provide status updates / reports.</li> <li>Submit OEM reports to ICS / ECC regarding district office and field conditions, progress, achievements, incidents, needs, etc.</li> <li>Deploy staff to survey affected areas for increased vector (mice, rat and ground squirrel) activity</li> <li>Ensure food safety by ordering removal of products from sale if necessary</li> </ul>	
4	<p>Community Health Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respond to incidents as necessary to provide emergency shelter support as well as treatment for control of any communicable disease that may arise as a result of climate change.</li> </ul>	
5	<p>Emergency Preparedness and Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activate the Department level ICS structures</li> <li>Manage and monitor decision making conference calls</li> <li>Maintain tactical communication linkages for responders</li> </ul>	<p>Emergency Preparedness and Response Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program Administration</li> <li>Emergency Operations</li> </ul>

Task Number	Element	Tasked To
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and deploy Agency Representatives</li> <li>• Respond to the following incidents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fires</li> <li>○ Floods</li> <li>○ Mudslides</li> <li>○ Power outages</li> <li>○ Water contamination incidents</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If CDC PHEP contingent supplemental emergency response funding is issued, administer the department's emergency response grant</li> <li>• Maintain access to and provide updates from ENSO projected impact and real-time data sources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning and Policy</li> </ul>
6	<p>Veterinary Public Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Information</li> <li>• Emergency Preparedness and Response</li> <li>• Disease Surveillance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-disaster related information and temporary animal shelters on website.</li> <li>• Coordinate with local animal control agencies to address animal needs.</li> <li>• Monitoring animal disease surveillance reports.</li> </ul>

**Recovery** (activities undertaken to make whole that which was damaged or destroyed as a result of the event. This may include cleanup, rebuilding, or waste removal activities.)

Task Number	Element	Tasked To
1	Public Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide health education materials as needed in affected areas</li> </ul>	Public Information
2	Disease Surveillance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to monitor instances of disease outbreak</li> </ul>	ACDC-EPI
3	Environmental Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist as requested in recovery efforts</li> <li>Revisit affected sites to verify proper corrections are made and apply learned design flows and other discoveries to all future plan reviews.</li> <li>Assessment: DWP should develop a protocol in assessing damaged or destroyed wells</li> <li>State and Federal Assistance: Assist affected owners/operators in securing State and Federal funding to repair or replace damaged wells and equipment</li> <li>Record Keeping: Develop an electronic inventory or data of damaged or destroyed wells to keep track of the recovery phase after a disaster: repairs, funding, etc.</li> <li>verify that wholesale food facilities are not affected</li> <li>Re-inspect affected food facilities</li> <li>Assist with programs with organizing waste removal and immersing vector issues</li> <li>Order a re-supply of all used equipment, supplies, and tools</li> <li>Analyses the disaster and improve the plan for future</li> <li>Have staff work with those facilities that had insufficient/inadequate mitigation measures in place and determine what additional measures</li> </ul>	1. Water <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drinking Water (3, 4, 5)</li> <li>Cross Connection (2)</li> <li>Recreational Water (1)</li> <li>Land Use</li> </ul> 2. Food <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wholesale Food &amp; Safety (6)</li> <li>Specialized Food Services (7)</li> </ul> 3. Housing/shelter 4. Vector (17) 5. Solid Waste (11, 12) 6. Emergency Preparedness & Response (8, 9, 10) 7. District Surveillance & Enforcement – Food & Housing (13, 14, 15, 16)

Task Number	Element	Tasked To
	<p>should have been taken and will be implemented for future subsequent major rain events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine both on and off-site impacts, if any, that resulted from the rain even</li> <li>• Assist with evaluating and prioritizing key recovery operations, areas, etc.</li> <li>• Identify staff to assist with the recovery process.</li> <li>• Develop staff schedules and work locations and share with ICS / ECC.</li> <li>• Assist ICS / ECC with developing and implementing the recovery process (e.g. identify related function, goals, objectives, etc.); share pertinent recovery process information with staff assigned to this phase.</li> <li>• Re-inspect affected areas</li> </ul>	
4	<p>Community Health Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in recovery activities as designated by EPRP</li> </ul>	
5	<p>Emergency Preparedness and Response Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in the coordination of recovery activities</li> <li>• Establish a reporting structure for recovery elements</li> <li>• Establish information flow processes for recovery activities</li> <li>• Participate in the department's emergency management recovery grant application from other federal funding sources including the Federal Emergency Management Agency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Administration</li> <li>• Emergency Operations</li> <li>• Planning and Policy</li> </ul>