

BRIDGE FIRE DISASTER RECOVERY

Beginning on September 8, 2024, the Bridge Fire ignited in the Sheep Mountain Wilderness area of the Angeles National Forest and rapidly spread to surrounding areas in the County of Los Angeles (County), including the Wrightwood and Mount Baldy communities and San Bernardino County. The Bridge Fire has burned over 54,000 acres necessitating evacuations of County residents, led to major road closures and power disruption, and required multiple human and pet sheltering operations.

The Bridge Fire required coordination, collaboration, and the combined forces of different jurisdictions to effectively respond. Thousands of fire fighters, first responders, firefighting aircraft and fire equipment and apparatus have been deployed to combat the Bridge Fire. At present, the fire is close to being fully contained.

On September 10, 2024, the Chair of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board), proclaimed the existence of a local emergency for the Bridge Fire in the County, which the Board ratified on September 17, 2024. On September 11, 2024, California Governor Gavin Newsom proclaimed a state of emergency in Los Angeles County due to the Bridge Fire.

Within or below the burned area boundaries are facilities of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District, which provide critical flood and debris flow mitigation; water supply facilities of the Los Angeles County Waterworks Districts; sewer facilities of the Consolidated Sewer Maintenance District; County and State roads and appurtenant infrastructure; and numerous homes and businesses.

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MOTION

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With the significant loss of vegetation resulting from the fire, there is a heightened risk of flooding, debris flows, and mudslides from the burned areas during storm events, until the vegetation in the burn areas has recovered. Furthermore, with the scale of the Bridge Fire, flooding hazards could extend into downstream communities.

Initial estimates indicate approximately 8 million cubic yards of debris and sediment could flow into debris basins, debris dams, and reservoirs below the burn areas, reducing the capacity to provide flood protection to downstream communities. In addition, the large quantities of sediment expected to flow into the reservoirs during upcoming storm events as a result of the burned watershed conditions could threaten the operability of the dams' outlet works.

Such impacts could prevent the controlled releases of the stormwater flows from the dams and result in larger uncontrolled flows from the dams' spillways, potentially resulting in flooding of the downstream communities. The health and safety of the residents of the County therefore, require that Los Angeles County Public Works take immediate emergency action to repair and restore the facilities damaged and impaired as a result of the Bridge Fire.

As the County marshals all available resources to provide a critical lifeline for recovery to these impacted constituents, we are also in need of additional state and federal resources to ensure that we have a wide array of assistance programs to rebuild the damaged homes, public infrastructure, and valued community assets.

The County should be mindful of the potential cost of rebuilding, but also the unforeseen costs that may be incurred by property owners long before rebuilding starts. This includes debris removal from properties and ability to locate available sources for waste disposal. Given the current uncertainty surrounding solid waste disposal in the County, it is incumbent that we take action to ensure sufficient capacity and ability for impacted property owners to find available and cost effective disposal solutions.

Affected property owners have property tax bills coming due in November. In advance of payment, the County will need to assess land, planning, building, and assessor records; and property owners will need to clear their properties of potentially hazardous materials and fire debris prior to contemplating the rebuilding process. All this is dependent upon the financial abilities of the individual property owners and the speed with which they are able to access financial resources and insurance proceeds.

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I, THEREFORE MOVE, that the Board of Supervisors direct the Office of Emergency Management to activate the Recovery Section of the County Emergency Operations Center, establish the following recovery task forces – Economic Recovery, Watershed Hazard Assessment, Health and Social Services, Debris Removal and Rebuild, and Natural and Cultural Resources, and coordinate with County Departments to take all necessary actions to effectuate the recovery phase for the impacted communities;

I, FURTHER MOVE, that the Board of Supervisors instruct County Departments to take the following actions, and any other specific actions necessary to recovery, within the umbrella of the Recovery Section, as follows:

1. Direct the Department of Public Health, Public Works, Fire Department, and Office of Emergency Management to conduct an evaluation of the ability to expedite the safe removal of fire debris including Household Hazardous Waste;
2. Direct the Department of Public Health, Department of Mental Health, and Department of Public Social Services to conduct a needs assessment and evaluate the implementation of public health, mental health, and eligible social service resources to mitigate the negative effects experienced by those affected by the Bridge Fire;
3. Direct the Los Angeles County Development Authority, Department of Consumer and Business Affairs, and the Department of Aging and Disabilities to conduct an assessment on the ability to provide eligible housing and community-based services to mitigate the loss experienced by those impacted by the Bridge Fire;
4. Direct the Registrar Recorder/County Clerk to suspend all fees for copies of real property records recorded with the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk for any individuals who lost such records as a result of the Bridge Fire and direct the CEO to reimburse the Registrar Recorded/County Clerk for said suspension of fees;
5. Request the Los Angeles County Assessor and instruct the Treasurer and Tax Collector to inform affected property owners of the importance of filing a Misfortune and Calamity Claim, including the impact to the deferral of the first installment property taxes due December 10, 2024;
6. Instruct the Treasurer and Tax Collector to ensure that payment is deferred without penalty or interest for those affected by the Bridge Fire until the Assessor reassess property in accordance with state law;
7. Request the Los Angeles County Assessor to report back to the Board in 90 days on the number of affected property owners who filed Misfortune and Calamity Claims, as well as the number of affected property owners that requested a cancellation of late payment penalties from the Treasurer and Tax Collector;

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8. Instruct the Director of Department of Consumer and Business Affairs to conduct outreach to residents impacted by the disaster and provide information regarding price gouging and consumer best practices, and tenant protections;
9. Direct the Director of Regional Planning to identify solid waste disposal facilities with active conditional use permits that allow for an expansion in operations, including modifications to permits and restrictions which will allow for increased capacity and hours of operation, and delegate authority to the Director to authorize such expansions, to the extent allowed by the California Environmental Quality Act, in the County to ensure that recovery efforts are not constrained by existing pressures on solid waste disposal, recovery, and rebuilding efforts in the County;
10. Direct the Chief Executive Office, in conjunction with the Departments of Public Works and Regional Planning and the Fire Department, to build online resources, specific to the impacted communities, that provide step by step instructions on the recovery and rebuilding process.

I, FURTHER MOVE, that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Find that the actions, projects, and repairs needed to respond to this emergency, as described in this motion, are statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to Public Resources Code, Section 21080(b) (2), (3) and (4) and Section 15269 (a), (b) and (c) of the State CEQA Guidelines;
2. Find that public interest and necessity demand immediate action to respond to the emergency conditions created by the Bridge Fire including the repair and restoration of roads, bridges, roadway drainage, flood control facilities and other public infrastructure impacted by the Fire, the removal of sediment from debris basins, debris dams, and major dams including Morris, San Gabriel, San Dimas and any additional dams which may be impacted by the Fires, the construction of rail and timber structures and other temporary and permanent debris mitigation measures and structures, and any other directly related and immediate action required to address those conditions for the public health and safety as determined by the Director of Public Works; and that the emergency conditions will not permit the delay that would result if such actions were performed pursuant to a contract procured through a competitive solicitation for bids.

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3. Authorize and direct the Director of Public Works or his designee on behalf of the County, and acting and as the Road Commissioner, the Chief Engineer of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District, and County Engineer, to carry out the following emergency activities:
 - a. Coordinate with the National Forest Service, San Bernardino County, and any other property owner as needed to restore and modify damaged infrastructure, including the construction of temporary and permanent debris mitigation measures, required as a result of the fire;
 - b. Trim or remove fire-damaged trees adjacent to any County roads, bridges, flood control facilities and water supply facilities within the fire area. If any of the trees are within Significant Ecological Areas, work with the Department of Regional Planning to secure permits or exemptions, if applicable, for said work, with particular emphasis on addressing impacted Joshua Trees and Oak Trees;
 - c. Restore and/or repair roads, bridges, roadway drainage, flood control facilities and other public infrastructure impacted by the Fire; remove sediment from debris basins, debris dams, and major dams including Morris, San Gabriel, San Dimas and any additional dams which may be impacted by the Fire; construct rail and timber structures and other temporary and permanent debris mitigation measures and structures; and take any other directly related and immediate action required to address the conditions created by the Fires for the public's health and safety as determined by the Director of Public Works;
 - d. Conduct outreach to impacted residents and provide engineering advice on mitigation of impacts from potential debris flows;
 - e. Analyze and map debris flow hazards and develop strategies and action plans for potential mudflow events, including maintenance and road closure plans;
 - f. Acquire necessary rights of way and permits, and enter into agreements, including but not limited to cooperative agreements with the United States Forest Service, as necessary to carry out the emergency actions in this Motion;
 - g. Submit grant applications and conduct any necessary actions, including negotiating and executing grant agreements and signing requests for reimbursements to the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the California Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, and the California Office of Emergency Services in order to secure Federal and State funds for emergency infrastructure repairs and rehabilitation, and debris flow protection measures, as necessary;

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- h. Fully utilize existing resources, and apply increased resources as necessary, to assist property owners in the same removal of Household Hazardous Waste and the reconstruction of structures damaged or destroyed by the fire. Assistance by the Departments of Regional Planning, Public Health, Fire, and Public Works will include streamlined coordination, plan review, and permit issuance for project compliance with County's building codes and all building requirements. Assistance will also include enhanced community outreach to affected property owners through local information workshops and one-on-one consultation;
 - i. Amend, supplement, and extend for up to 2 years existing professional and support service contracts, such as geotechnical, design, inspection, environmental and survey, by up to an additional \$5,000,000 each, not to exceed a maximum additional aggregate amount of \$50,000,000 to support Public Works' emergency recovery activities, and up to an additional \$5,000,000 each, with a not to exceed maximum additional aggregate amount of \$25,000,000 for other existing support service contracts, such as field security, debris removal and disposal, haul-truck services, and operated heavy equipment contracts, to support emergency repairs to County facilities and construction of temporary and permanent debris mitigation measures required as a result of the Bridge Fire;
 - j. Amend and supplement the existing road emergency repair contracts by up to an additional aggregate amount of \$5 million to support emergency repairs to County facilities and construction of temporary and permanent debris mitigation measures required as a result of the Bridge Fire.
 - k. Perform any of the actions described in this motion by force account and to negotiate and amend existing emergency and other as-needed/on-call contracts, in an amount not to exceed an aggregate total of \$30 million, for the necessary equipment, services, and supplies in order to carry out any of the actions by Public Works described in this motion; and
 - l. Work with Southern California Edison to expedite the establish a streamlined permitting process to install temporary power solutions and associated infrastructure within the public rights-of-way and on County properties;
4. Authorize the Director of Public Works to perform force account work, to negotiate and amend existing emergency and as-needed contracts on behalf of the County, in an amount not to exceed an aggregate total of \$30 million for the necessary equipment, services, and supplies in order to repair road facilities damaged by the Bridge Fire;

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5. Require the Director of Public Works to report back to the Board on a regular basis as required by Section 22050 of the Public Contract Code what actions have been taken and verify the need to continue these emergency actions, with such report backs taking place until such time that the undertaken actions have been terminated;
6. Direct the Director of Public Works to work with the Department of Public Health to identify and streamline permitting for necessary actions to repair existing septic systems and water wells;

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