



Information and General Services Department

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NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Board Agenda Memo

MEETING DATE: August 22, 2023

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Craig Griesbach – Director of Emergency Services

SUBJECT: Acceptance of the Office of Emergency Services Request to terminate the local emergency for the January Winter Storm and extend the emergency for the February Winter Storms.

RECOMMENDATION: Accept the staff recommendations to terminate the local emergency for the 2022-2023 Winter Storm (January) and extend the Late February Winter Storm Emergency by 60 days.

FUNDING: No fiscal impacts are anticipated at this time. Active reimbursement is continuing to be sought with applicable state and federal agencies.

BACKGROUND:

January Winter Storm:

On December 29, 2022, winter storms related to an atmospheric river system struck Nevada County, bringing damaging winds, substantial precipitation including significant snowfall at higher elevations, and flooding. The threat of mud and debris flows, particularly across County roads, bridges and in burn scar areas caused a threat to residents. The County road system sustained some damages due to the amount of water passing over and through road surfaces as well as culvert failures that County of Nevada road crews responded to. The significant rainfall, snowfall, and high winds resulted in debris flows, downed trees, and power lines causing damage to infrastructure throughout the County.

On January 4, 2023 Governor Newsom declared a state of emergency due to the 2022-23 winter storms impacting communities throughout the State of California. On January 8, 2023 President Biden declared a federal state of emergency due to the 2022-23 winter storms recognizing specific impacts to 17 California counties. On January 9, 2023 the Nevada County Director of Emergency Services proclaimed a local emergency for the County of Nevada due to the 2022-23 winter storms. It is also important to note that the Washington Water District Board proclaimed a local emergency on January 3, 2023 and the City of Nevada City proclaimed a local emergency on January 5, 2023 due to damages incurred by the winter storms.

The emergency proclamation issued by the County of Nevada Office of Emergency Services was ratified on January 9th by the Board of Supervisors.

This Local Emergency Proclamation is no longer necessary, and staff recommends terminating it.

February Winter Storm:

On February 24, 2023, in the early morning continuing through March, Nevada County was hit with an intense series of winter snowstorm systems (“Snowstorm”) bringing excessive amounts of snow to areas that typically receive little to no snow. The Snowstorm caused over 20,000 Nevada County residents to lose PG&E utility power service with PG&E saying it took multiple days for restoration. Local telecommunications were severely hampered as well as reducing 911 services. As a result of the Snowstorm numerous trees were reported down across county roads, with many trees having attached utility power lines to them. There were numerous calls for service from local residents who had trees land on their homes, ran out of heating gas, did not have electricity, or did not have firewood to heat their homes, resulting in the need for the County to open warming shelters.

On February 24, 2023, at approximately 12:00 pm, Nevada County commenced emergency services opening its emergency operations center to respond to the community-wide emergency service needs. The conditions created by the Snowstorm were beyond the immediate capabilities of local resources, services, personnel, equipment, and facilities.

On March 1st, 2023 Governor Newsom declared a state of emergency due to the Snowstorm impacting communities throughout the State of California. On March 1, 2023 the Nevada County Director of Emergency Services proclaimed a local emergency for the County of Nevada due to the late February winter storms.

The County of Nevada continues to incur emergency response related costs stemming from the February Winter Storm and needs to maintain the local emergency proclamation for the next 60 days to ensure debris removal operations continue, infrastructure is assessed and repaired, damaged structures are addressed, and other ongoing storm related impacts are mitigated.

Item Initiated by: Paul Cummings, Office of Emergency Services Program Manager

Approved by: Craig Griesbach, Director of Emergency Services