

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors DATE: August 31, 2021
FROM: Todd Leopold, County Executive Officer
By: Dave Atkinson, Assistant Director of Emergency Services
SUBJECT: Resolution to Reaffirm a Local Emergency in Placer County due to the River Fire

ACTION REQUESTED

Adopt a Resolution to reaffirm a local emergency in Placer County due to the River Fire.

BACKGROUND

When a condition of extreme peril or potential peril to the safety of persons and property exists, and the condition is beyond the capability of local forces to control effectively, the Board of Supervisors or a person authorized by the Board may proclaim that a local emergency exists. A local emergency may be proclaimed to exist due to a specific situation, such as flood, fire, storm, earthquake, epidemic, drought, sudden and severe energy shortage, or other condition, as authorized by Section 8630 of the California Government Code.

The River Fire near Colfax started on August 4, 2021, and subsequently crossed the Bear River, entering Nevada County. Due to the need for evacuations and requests for additional resources, the Placer County Office of Emergency Services activated the Emergency Operations Center at level 2 on that same day. In support of the ongoing response, the Placer County Director of Emergency Services proclaimed a local emergency on August 5, 2021. This action was ratified by your Board on August 10, 2021, with the adoption of Resolution No. 2021-280.

Full containment of the River Fire was reached on August 14, 2021. CalFire reported in its final incident update that the River Fire burned 2,619 acres of land, destroyed 102 residential structures, damaged an additional 21 residential structures, and destroyed 39 other structures in Placer and Nevada counties.

In the days following the reopening of the area affected by the River Fire, staff from several county departments and local special districts worked with state and federal agencies to determine the scope and scale of the impacts from the fire and the need for state and federal assistance in recovery. This review indicated an ongoing emergency condition existed based on the extent of damage and the ongoing threat to public safety from conditions in the fire area. A Presidential Major Disaster Declaration for California wildfires, including the River Fire, was subsequently issued on August 24, 2021, at the request of the Governor's office.

Both county code and state law require that your Board review the emergency proclamation every sixty (60) days and either re-affirm or terminate the declaration of local emergency. Placer County alone lacks the capability and local resources to deal with the River Fire emergency. Reaffirming the local emergency will aid the County in a united effort to seek state and federal funding and support to address this emergency in the County.

The action before your Board asks for your Board to adopt a Resolution Reaffirming Local Emergency (Attachment 3).

Additional facts and updates will be provided at the time this item is presented to the Board.

FISCAL IMPACT

Potential fiscal impact is unknown at this time.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Proclamation of Existence of a Local Emergency dated August 5, 2021
2. Adopted Resolution No. 2021-280
3. Resolution Reaffirming Local Emergency

PROCLAMATION OF THE EXISTENCE OF A LOCAL EMERGENCY BY THE DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES FOR THE COUNTY OF PLACER DUE TO THE RIVER FIRE

WHEREAS, California Government Code §8550, the California Emergency Services Act, confers upon the governing bodies of the political subdivisions of this state emergency powers necessary to protect health and safety and preserve lives and property; and

WHEREAS, California Government Code §8630 states that “a local emergency may be proclaimed only by the governing body of a county, a city and county, or city or by an official so designated by ordinance adopted by such governing body”; and

WHEREAS, Placer County Code, Chapter 2, empowers the Director of Emergency Services to proclaim the existence or threatened existence of a local emergency when said County is affected or likely to be affected by a public calamity and the County Board of Supervisors is not in session, subject to ratification by the Board of Supervisors within seven days and reaffirmation every 60 days thereafter until such local emergency and;

WHEREAS, the Director of Emergency Services of the County of Placer does hereby find that; conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property have arisen within said county, caused by the River Fire which began on the 4th day of August, 2021 and; That these conditions are or are likely to be beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment, and facilities of said County, and; That the Placer County Board of Supervisors is not in session and cannot immediately be called into session;

WHEREAS, thousands of Placer County residents are currently threatened by the rapid growth of the River Fire, resulting in a substantial risk to the safety of these residents and/or the loss of their homes and belongings, thereby necessitating mass mandatory and voluntary evacuations of those individuals living in and around the fire zone; and

WHEREAS, the River Fire poses an immediate threat to numerous private homes and other structures in the rural communities of Placer County, including power lines and water infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the response to the River Fire is beyond the capabilities of the local resources;

WHEREAS, on August 5, 2021, the Governor of California secured a Fire Management Grant (FMAG) from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to help ensure the availability of vital resources to suppress the River Fire;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY PROCLAIMED that a local emergency now exists throughout Placer County, and;

IT IS FURTHER PROCLAIMED AND ORDERED that during the existence of said local emergency the powers, functions, and duties of the emergency organization of Placer County shall be those prescribed by state law, by ordinances, and resolutions of this County; and that this emergency proclamation shall expire 7 days after issuance unless confirmed and ratified by the governing body of the County of Placer.

Dated: 8/5/21

By: 
Todd Leopold
Director of Emergency Services

Before the Board of Supervisors County of Placer, State of California

**In the matter of: A RESOLUTION RATIFYING THE
PROCLAMATION OF A LOCAL EMERGENCY DUE TO
THE RIVER FIRE SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACTING
COMMUNITIES IN PLACER COUNTY**

Resolution No.: 2021-280

The following Resolution was duly passed by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Placer at a regular meeting held August 10, 2021, by the following vote:

Ayes: GORE, HOLMES, JONES, GUSTAFSON, WEYGANDT

Noes: NONE

Absent: NONE

Signed and approved by me after its passage.


Chair, Board of Supervisors

Attest:


Clerk of said Board

WHEREAS, Chapter 2 of the Placer County Code empowers the Director of Emergency Services to proclaim a local emergency when the county is affected or threatened by an event causing great damage, possible loss of life, or other public calamity and the Board of Supervisors is not in session; and

WHEREAS, on August 5, 2021, the Director of Emergency Services proclaimed a local emergency due to the River Fire threatening communities in Placer County; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.88.060 of the Placer County Code requires the Board of Supervisors to ratify the emergency proclamation within seven (7) days or the proclamation will no longer be in force; and

WHEREAS, thousands of Placer County residents continue to be threatened by the rapid growth of the River Fire, resulting in a substantial risk to the safety of these residents and/or the loss of their homes and belongings, thereby necessitating mass mandatory and voluntary evacuations of those individuals living in and around the fire zone; and

WHEREAS, the River Fire posed and continues to pose an immediate threat to numerous private homes and other structures in the rural communities of Placer County, including power lines and water infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the County of Placer has activated the Emergency Operations Center, and these conditions are, or are likely to be, beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment, and facilities of the County of Placer; and

WHEREAS, the Governor of California has secured a Fire Management Grant (FMAG) from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to help ensure the availability of vital resources to suppress the River Fire; and

WHEREAS, on August 5, 2021, the Governor of California proclaimed a state of emergency in Placer County due to the River Fire.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Placer County Board of Supervisors hereby ratifies the proclamation of a local emergency due to the significant, ongoing and possible undiscovered impacts due to the River Fire in Placer County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Placer County Board of Supervisors shall review the need for continuing the local emergency at least every month and shall terminate the emergency as soon as local conditions warrant.

BE IT PROCLAIMED AND ORDERED that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the Director of the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services requesting that the Director find it acceptable in accordance with State law; that the Governor of California pursuant to the Emergency Services Act, issue a proclamation declaring an emergency in Placer County; that the Governor waive regulations that may hinder response and recovery efforts; that response and recovery assistance be made available under the California Disaster Assistance Act; and that the State expedite access to State and Federal resources and any other appropriate federal disaster relief programs.

The foregoing Resolution was duly passed and adopted by the Board of Supervisors for the County of Placer, State of California at the regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors on August 10, 2021 by the vote listed above.

Before the Board of Supervisors County of Placer, State of California

In the matter of: **A RESOLUTION REAFFIRMING THE
DECLARATION OF A LOCAL EMERGENCY DUE TO THE
RIVER FIRE SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACTING COMMUNITIES IN
PLACER COUNTY**

Resolution No.: _____

The following Resolution was duly passed by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Placer at a regular meeting held August 31, 2021, by the following vote:

Ayes:

Noes:

Absent:

Signed and approved by me after its passage.

Chair, Board of Supervisors

Attest:

Clerk of said Board

WHEREAS, Chapter 2 of the Placer County Code empowers the Director of Emergency Services to proclaim a local emergency when the county is affected or threatened by an event causing great damage, possible loss of life, or other public calamity and the Board of Supervisors is not in session; and

WHEREAS, on August 4, 2021, the River Fire started near Colfax, burning 2,619 acres of land and caused significant structural damage to, or the complete destruction of, numerous private structures.

WHEREAS, on August 5, 2021, the Governor of California proclaimed a state of emergency in Placer County due to the River Fire and secured a Fire Management Grant (FMAG) from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to help ensure the availability of vital resources to suppress the River Fire; and

WHEREAS, on August 5, 2021, the Director of Emergency Services proclaimed a local emergency due to the River Fire threatening communities in Placer County; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.88.060 of the Placer County Code requires the Board of Supervisors to ratify the local emergency proclamation within seven (7) days or the proclamation will no longer be in force; and

WHEREAS, August 10, 2021, the Board of Supervisors ratified the local emergency proclamation with the adoption of Resolution No. 2021-280.

WHEREAS, a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration for California wildfires, including the River Fire in Placer County, was issued on August 24, 2021.

WHEREAS, conditions associated with the River Fire posed and continue to pose an ongoing threat to numerous private homes and other structures in the rural communities of Placer County, including power lines and water infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the County of Placer had activated the Emergency Operations Center, and these conditions are, or are likely to be, beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment, and facilities of the County of Placer; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Placer County Board of Supervisors hereby reaffirms the existence of a local emergency due to the significant, ongoing and possible undiscovered impacts due to the River Fire in Placer County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Placer County Board of Supervisors shall review the need for continuing the local emergency at least every sixty (60) days and shall terminate the local emergency as soon as local conditions warrant.

BE IT PROCLAIMED AND ORDERED that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to state and federal agencies in order to secure appropriate disaster relief programs.

The foregoing Resolution was duly passed and adopted by the Board of Supervisors for the County of Placer, State of California at the regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors on August 31, 2021 by the vote listed above.

