

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

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## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Climate change continues to lengthen the fire season in California. Four consecutive years of catastrophic wildfires have surpassed all previous records. The 2018 calendar year brought the largest, deadliest, and most damaging fires in the state's history. By the end of 2018, wildfires in California killed over 100 people, destroyed more than 22,700 structures, and burned over 1.8 million acres—more than double the most recent 10-year average of acres burned. Emergencies of this magnitude are becoming a more regular occurrence and the impacts of these disasters are devastating to people and communities. The Budget proposes to bolster the preparedness of individuals and communities, makes additional investments in prevention and critical emergency response systems, and builds up the state's firefighting capabilities.

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## UNPRECEDENTED DISASTERS

On November 8, 2018, a state of emergency was declared for Butte County due to the effects of the Camp Fire—the deadliest and most destructive wildfire in California history. The Camp Fire destroyed more than 18,000 structures and 90 percent of the Town of Paradise, which was home to almost 27,000 residents.

While the Camp Fire was decimating portions of Northern California, two other fires—the Hill Fire and the Woolsey Fire—were raging in Los Angeles and Ventura counties in Southern California. On November 9, 2018, a state of emergency was declared for Los Angeles and Ventura counties due to the effects of these fires that burned more than 100,000 acres, damaging and destroying hundreds of homes and other structures.

On November 12, 2018, California secured a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration to bolster the ongoing emergency response and help residents recover from these devastating fires. The declaration helps people in the impacted counties by providing eligibility for programs and support, including housing assistance, food aid, unemployment assistance, counseling, and medical and legal services.

To aid in the recovery efforts, executive orders were issued to waive the one-week waiting period for unemployment insurance benefits for impacted individuals; suspend the fees associated with the replacement of specified documents and records; suspend specified procurement rules to allow state agencies to enter into contracts for goods, materials, and services necessary to quickly assist with response and recovery efforts; and strengthen coordination between state agencies on environmental restoration in fire impacted areas.

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### **DISASTER RESPONSE**

Until December 31, 2018, the California Disaster Assistance Act authorized the Director of Finance to immediately access funds from the Special Fund for Economic Uncertainties for critical response and recovery efforts. To address immediate response and recovery efforts for communities affected by the November 2018 wildfires, the Director of Finance accessed approximately \$2.9 billion before this authority expired. This funding will ensure no delays in the removal of hazardous waste and debris that threatens public health and the environment if not immediately addressed. The majority of these costs will be reimbursed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). FEMA generally covers 75 percent of California's eligible costs for response and recovery. However, given the scope of the disasters, the Administration will continue to seek a 100-percent cost share from FEMA. A similar request for the 2017 disasters resulted in a 90-percent cost share by FEMA. The Budget assumes that the state will be responsible for 25 percent of eligible costs, resulting in increased General Fund expenditures of \$923.1 million.

The Budget also includes statutory amendments to the California Disaster Assistance Act to permanently authorize the Director's transfer authority that expired on December 31, 2018. The ability of the Director of Finance to immediately access funds is critical to the state's ability to assist communities when a disaster strikes. The Administration is seeking immediate legislative action on this statutory amendment.

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## **SUPPORTING LOCAL RECOVERY EFFORTS**

To further support local recovery efforts, the Budget includes:

### **PROPERTY TAX BACKFILL**

The Budget includes \$31.3 million General Fund to backfill wildfire-related property tax revenue losses for cities, counties, and special districts. This includes funding for the following:

- \$11.5 million to backfill entities in Butte, Lake, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, Shasta and Siskiyou counties for losses estimated to be incurred in 2019-20 as a result of the 2018 wildfires.
- \$16.1 million to backfill entities in Butte County for losses estimated to be incurred in 2020-21 and 2021-22 due to the 2018 Camp Fire.
- \$3.6 million to backfill entities in Lake County for losses estimated to be incurred in 2019-20, 2020-21, and 2021-22 resulting from the wildfires in 2015, 2016, and 2017.

The Budget includes an additional backfill amount for Butte and Lake counties given the magnitude of the fire damage in these counties will require additional time to reconstruct the impacted properties and restore them to the property tax rolls.

The wildfire-related property tax revenue losses incurred by K-14 schools are generally backfilled under the Proposition 98 school funding mechanism. The Budget estimates K-14 schools will incur \$19 million in 2019-20 property tax revenue losses because of the November 2018 wildfires.

### **WAIVE LOCAL SHARE OF DEBRIS REMOVAL COSTS**

The Budget assumes the state will waive the local share of debris removal costs for the November 2018 wildfires. Generally, local entities are responsible for 25 percent of the non-federal share of debris removal costs. At the time of finalizing this publication, it was

not yet known what percentage of the overall costs the federal government would cover; however, the Budget assumes the state will bear the entirety of California's share. Total debris removal costs for the Camp, Woolsey, and Hill fires are currently estimated at \$2.5 billion across the Office of Emergency Services, the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery, and the Department of Toxic Substances Control. Under normal circumstances, this would result in costs of \$155.2 million to counties that the state has waived.

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### OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Office of Emergency Services (OES) coordinates the state's emergency readiness through local, regional, and statewide training exercises and programs. California's mutual aid system is designed to provide sufficient resources to local jurisdictions when their own resources become inadequate or overwhelmed during an emergency event. During emergencies, OES coordinates all local, inter-regional, and state agency activities. After the event, OES functions as the state's liaison with FEMA to provide recovery assistance to local governments and individuals impacted by the event.

The Budget proposes an additional \$172.3 million to improve the state's emergency response and preparedness capabilities through the following OES proposals.

- State Emergency Telephone Number Account (SETNA) and 9-1-1 Advancements—A one-time investment of \$60 million General Fund—\$10 million in 2018-19 and \$50 million in 2019-20—that will be deposited in SETNA to continue implementing improvements to the state's 9-1-1 system. Specifically, these resources will enable OES to begin upgrading the California Public Safety Microwave Network from an analog system to a digital system in the current year to enhance emergency response communications. The Network provides connectivity for public safety radio systems that link responders and dispatchers, provides redundancy and resiliency, and enhances disaster recovery. This initial General Fund investment partially reduces reliance on the SETNA fee during the build-out of 9-1-1 enhancements but is contingent upon legislation to modernize the fee structure. The Budget assumes that the new fee structure will be implemented on January 1, 2020, generating approximately \$170 million annually during the build-out, but will be adjusted annually based on actual costs. Creating a more stable funding structure will allow OES to fully implement a statewide Next Generation 9-1-1 system that provides various benefits compared to the legacy system, including faster call delivery, increased routing accuracy and functionality, call overflow and backup

functionality, updated geographic information capability and wireless location data, and incoming text capability. Combined, these proposals will improve public safety and significantly advance California's emergency response capabilities.

- **Broadband Communication and 9-1-1 Integration**—\$1 million SETNA to support the implementation and ongoing workload associated with emergency communications coordination and First Responder Network Authority broadband network services. These resources will ensure that the state has an established 9-1-1 and emergency management system, while further enhancing and assisting the transition towards the Next Generation 9-1-1 system.
- **California Earthquake Early Warning**—\$16.3 million General Fund one-time is set-aside to finish the build-out of the California Earthquake Early Warning System.
- **Mutual Aid System**—\$25 million General Fund ongoing for repositioning of existing OES and local government resources that are part of the statewide mutual aid system with the goal of enhancing disaster response readiness. Repositioning occurs in areas of identified potential fire threat, which is determined through various means such as weather modeling, high wind zones, low humidity, and dense fire load. The prepositioned resources include, but are not limited to, fire engines, trucks, personnel, and strike teams.
- **Public Education**—\$50 million General Fund one-time in 2018-19 to immediately begin a comprehensive, statewide education campaign on disaster preparedness and safety. This effort will focus on community engagement and public education in high-risk areas with an emphasis on public health and safety and will make local grants available to address local and regional needs.
- **California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA)**—\$20 million General Fund one-time to increase the amount of funding available through CDAA, which is used to repair, restore, or replace public real property damaged or destroyed by a disaster, and to reimburse local government costs associated with certain emergency activities undertaken in response to a state of emergency. This augmentation increases total CDAA funding to \$82.6 million in 2019-20.

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## DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION

The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) provides resource management and wildland fire protection services covering over 31 million acres. It operates 234 fire stations and also staffs local fire departments when funded by local governments. CAL FIRE contracts with county agencies in six counties to provide

wildland fire protection services. The Budget includes \$2.6 billion (\$1.6 billion General Fund) and 7,645.6 positions for CAL FIRE.

Conditions in the state's wildlands are changing rapidly, and a growing number of people and residential structures are located in the wildland urban interface. Despite additional precipitation over the past several years, vegetation remains critically dry. Weather events are more extreme, winds blow with more intensity for longer durations, and humidity levels are lower for longer periods of time. Conditions historically observed in Southern California vegetation are moving north in latitude and higher in elevation. The Central and Southern Sierra continue to be affected by tree mortality, which has resulted in over 140 million dead trees and created more volatile and flammable vegetation.

The Budget proposes an additional \$415.1 million to improve the health of the state's forestlands and enhance CAL FIRE's fire protection capabilities. Specific elements include:

- **Increasing Fire Prevention**—\$213.6 million from various funds to (1) complete more fuel reduction projects through the operation of prescribed fire crews and grants for forest health projects, (2) implement the recently enacted wildfire prevention and recovery legislative package, which streamlines regulatory barriers for fuel reduction projects, and (3) dispose of illegal and dangerous fireworks. Consistent with the requirements of Chapter 626, Statutes of 2018 (SB 901), the Budget includes \$200 million Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund for forest thinning and forest health projects to reduce dead, dying, and overgrown vegetation. Over the next five years, \$1 billion will be invested in these types of fire prevention and forest management activities. The Administration will be reviewing additional potential actions to remove barriers and expedite these critical projects. For additional information on the wildfire prevention and recovery legislative package, see the California Conservation Corps and Other Significant Emergency Preparedness and Response Proposals sections of this chapter.
- **Enhancing Aviation Resources**—\$120.8 million General Fund to add aircraft with increased tactical capabilities to CAL FIRE's aviation fleet to meet the challenges associated with more severe wildfire activity. Specifically, the Budget includes \$11.4 million General Fund for the first year of operating the large air tankers that will be transferred from the U.S. Air Force. Federal legislation authorized the transfer of seven C-130 air tankers to CAL FIRE, and the Budget assumes that one to two planes will be transferred each year beginning in 2019-20. The Budget also includes

\$109.4 million General Fund to continue the replacement of CAL FIRE's Vietnam War-era helicopters with new state-of-the art helicopters.

- Expanding Firefighting Surge Capacity—\$64.4 million General Fund to enhance CAL FIRE's fire protection capabilities, including resources to (1) add 13 new year-round fire engines that will be located in areas of the state with the highest fire risk, (2) expand heavy fire equipment operator staffing to support CAL FIRE's bulldozer operations during emergency wildfire events, (3) accelerate the replacement of fire engines and other mobile equipment to address increased wear and tear on CAL FIRE's vehicles resulting from the longer fire season, and (4) operate five additional CAL FIRE/California Conservation Corps fire crews. For additional information on the fire crews, see the California Conservation Corps section of this chapter.
- Supporting Emergency Responders—\$6.6 million from various funds to expand CAL FIRE's health and wellness program and to provide medical and psychological services, as well as peer support, to firefighters. Catastrophic wildfires are creating an environment where first responders are working longer hours and days to mitigate these incidents, while also focusing on evacuations in the early hours of fires to get individuals safely out of harm's way. Personnel are CAL FIRE's most valuable asset, and maintaining their long-term health and well-being allows them to be ready for the next emergency.
- Improving Use of Technology—\$9.7 million General Fund for (1) dedicated staff to review data gathered via remote sensing technology, situational awareness software and satellite imagery, which will support CAL FIRE's incident commanders in developing more effective initial and extended attack fire suppression strategies during wildfire events, and (2) 100 additional fire detection cameras that will be linked into the existing command centers to provide additional data on conditions.

As noted in this section, the Budget makes significant investments in forest health and fuel reduction as well as CAL FIRE's wildfire response capabilities. However, preventing wildfires and mitigating their impacts is a shared responsibility. Property owners can play a key role by removing or replacing fire prone exterior elements of existing structures and by making other fire prevention improvements to their properties. To that end, the Administration is exploring opportunities to make these improvements easier and less-costly for property owners in fire-prone areas.

## CALIFORNIA CONSERVATION CORPS

The California Conservation Corps (Corps) provides young women and men the opportunity to gain critical work experience through the completion of natural resource and energy conservation projects. The Corps is also an integral part of the state's emergency response network and corpsmember crews routinely respond to and provide critical assistance during fires, floods, and other disasters. Additionally, after emergency events occur, corpsmembers continue to provide relief through emergency revegetation, erosion control, and environmental restoration activities. The Corps currently serves approximately 1,600 corpsmembers across its 14 regions.

The Budget includes \$133.6 million (\$64.1 million General Fund) and 340.2 positions for the Corps. A portion of this funding is dedicated to providing enhanced services and training opportunities for current corpsmembers with a focus on reducing the threat of wildfires in high-risk areas of the state.

### Significant Adjustments:

- **Expanding Firefighting Surge Capacity: CAL FIRE/Corps Fire Crews—\$3.1 million General Fund** for the Corps to operate five additional fire crews at Los Padres, Camarillo, and Butte Fire Centers. These fire crews, staffed by corpsmembers, are cost-effective hand crews capable of reaching remote and rugged terrain not accessible by other fire suppression resources. When not actively engaged in firefighting operations, these crews will complete hazardous fuel reduction and fire prevention projects.
- **Wildfire Prevention and Recovery Legislative Package: Forestry Corps—\$4.5 million General Fund** to develop and implement the Forestry Corps Program, consistent with Chapter 635, Statutes of 2018 (AB 2126). This funding will support four Forestry Corps crews that will undertake forest health and hazardous fuel reduction projects in areas of high fire risk, which will increase public safety for fire-threatened communities, improve forest health conditions, and achieve associated climate goals. This Program will also provide specialized training and assistance to corpsmembers to create educational and career pathways to forestry and other related fields.



## OTHER SIGNIFICANT EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PROPOSALS

The Budget includes additional funding for various proposals that support first responders and the statewide mutual aid system.

- **Public Safety Radios**—California currently uses antiquated conventional radio systems. They operate on different radio frequencies and dissimilar infrastructure, and do not interoperate with radio systems. This makes it difficult for a first responder on one system to communicate with a first responder on another system. As a result, when a responder on one system needs to coordinate with another, they typically must relay messages through a dispatcher, a slow and inefficient process. Therefore, the Budget includes the following proposals related to updating and improving public safety radio communication:
  - \$59.5 million General Fund, over five years, for OES to develop and implement the California Interoperable Public Safety Radio System, which allows various agencies the ability to communicate with each other seamlessly, improve radio coverage to clients whose radio systems are geographically limited, and leverage and link to existing state and regional digital trunked radio systems.
  - \$2.9 million General Fund for the Department of Justice to replace aging radios with new interoperable equipment that will improve communication between agencies in emergency situations.
  - \$1.6 million General Fund for the Department of Fish and Wildlife to replace outdated vehicle-mounted and handheld radios, which are beyond their useful life. Radio replacement will increase wildlife officer safety and effectiveness and promote inter-system compatibility with the Federal First Responders Network Authority emergency services response program, which California opted into in 2017.
  - \$62.4 million (\$44.4 million General Fund and \$18 million special fund) for the California Highway Patrol (CHP) to replace 3,600 radio communication systems in CHP vehicles, \$15 million General Fund to replace aging laptops and hand-held citation devices with multi-function tablets, and \$9.5 million General Fund to replace aging information technology infrastructure and provide increased storage capacity, connectivity, and security.
- **Implementation of the Wildfire Prevention and Recovery Legislative Package**—\$20.5 million for various departments to implement the recently enacted

wildfire prevention and recovery legislative package and build the state's resilience to climate change-driven wildfire activity. Specifically, the Budget proposes the following additional resources:

- \$9.2 million from various funds to enable the Public Utilities Commission, including the Public Advocates Office, to address workload associated with wildfire cost recovery proceedings, reviewing and approving enhanced wildfire mitigation plans, and oversight of investor-owned utility compliance with legislative requirements to reduce the risk of utility-caused wildfires.
- \$3.4 million Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund to enhance the Air Resources Board's air quality and smoke monitoring, forecasting, reporting and modeling activities and support local air district public education efforts to align with the anticipated increase in prescribed burns and other fuels reduction activities.
- \$7.9 million from various funds to support the State Water Resources Control Board and Department of Fish and Wildlife's efforts to review timber harvest plan exemptions, and inspect, permit, and enforce projects that improve forest health and vegetation management activities to mitigate negative impacts on water quality, wildlife, and the environment.