

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Over the past five years, the state has experienced unprecedented emergencies, including severe drought, earthquakes, intense storms with associated flooding, and now the historic COVID-19 Pandemic.

Additionally, the impacts of climate change continue to intensify and lengthen the fire season in California. In 2020, 9,000 wildfires burned over 4 million acres—more than all of the acres burned in 2017 and 2018 combined. Six of the largest wildfires in the state's history occurred in August and September of 2020.

Accordingly, the Budget builds on recent investments to continue to enhance the state's ability to prepare for and respond to future disasters and protect vulnerable communities.

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

The state is responsible for mitigating the effects of disasters and for protecting the lives and property of the people of California. Under the authorities of the California Emergency Services Act, the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) serves as the state's leadership hub during all major emergencies and disasters. This includes responding, directing, and coordinating state and federal resources and mutual aid assets across all regions to support the diverse communities across the state.

Cal OES also supports local jurisdictions and communities through planning and preparedness activities, training, and facilitating the immediate response to an emergency through the longer-term recovery phase. During this process, Cal OES serves as the state's overall coordinator and agent to secure federal government resources through the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The Budget includes \$1.9 billion (\$443.1 million General Fund) and 1,119.2 positions for Cal OES.

STRENGTHENING CALIFORNIA'S EMERGENCY CAPACITY AND CAPABILITIES

California's emergencies and disasters have become more frequent, complicated, and often involve numerous counties and regions across the state. Consequently, Cal OES is developing a spring proposal to strengthen its ability to respond to increasingly complex disasters, security threats, and emergencies; lead multi-faceted, long-term recovery efforts across California; and strengthen equity and connections with vulnerable communities. The areas of focus for this proposal are:

- **Reducing Reliance on Redirected Staff**—When major emergencies or disasters occur, Cal OES redirects existing staff to operate the California's State Operations Center or Regional Emergency Operations Centers to respond to the events. Staff are also redirected to support Joint Field Offices embedded within the community to support recovery operations. Cal OES will explore ways to address the delays and incomplete work resulting from this coordinated redirection of staff and leadership teams from core Cal OES functions to support emergency response and recovery activities, which adversely impacts the organization's ability to fulfill its responsibilities and ultimately support response and recovery efforts.
- **Technology and Data Analytics**—The recent disasters have highlighted the need for greater technological capabilities to access and utilize data swiftly for situational awareness and in a manner that supports data-informed decision-making in real time. Cal OES has partnered with state technology experts to design dashboards to capture and utilize data, but more resources are needed to support technology and data capabilities on an ongoing basis.
- **Strengthening Equity and Connections with Communities**—California's disasters have had a significant impact on communities across the diverse state, but some communities have been hit harder than others. A strong connection between California's diverse communities and the emergency response network is key to better planning and preparation for disasters and swiftly meeting community needs during and after the emergency event. Cal OES is exploring ways to further

strengthen connections with all communities by building upon the work of the LISTOS campaign and reviewing approaches to advance equity and enhance cultural competence in delivering emergency response.

ENHANCING EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

The Budget includes an additional \$282 million General Fund for Cal OES for the following targeted investments:

- California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA)—\$256.1 million one-time General Fund to assist local governments in serving their communities during and in the wake of emergency events. This funding will be used to repair, restore, or replace public real property damaged or destroyed during disaster events or reimburse local governments for eligible costs associated with emergency activities undertaken in response to a state of emergency proclamation by the Governor.
- California Earthquake Early Warning System—\$17.3 million one-time General Fund to support the California Earthquake Early Warning System while ongoing revenue options continue to be evaluated and pursued. Following years of research and development, initial operation of the system began in October 2019 and is anticipated to be fully operational statewide by June 2021. The system continues to improve and be integrated with critical infrastructure facilities, such as manufacturing, hospitals, schools, transportation systems, and public safety offices.
- Regional Hazardous Materials Response—\$3.6 million ongoing General Fund to build the state's ability to respond to regional emergencies involving hazardous materials. California has 12 Regional Hazardous Material Response teams positioned throughout the state to respond to hazardous material incidents. These teams are specially equipped to be immediate response resources to mitigate these types of emergencies. This will continue the state's investment to bolster this critical statewide emergency response function.
- Deferred Maintenance—\$5 million one-time General Fund to address identified deferred maintenance needs, as described in the Five-Year Infrastructure Plan.

Additionally, the early action package proposes \$25 million one-time General Fund in 2020-21 for Cal OES (\$21.9 million) and the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (\$3.1 million) to support implementation of a home hardening pilot grant program, as referenced in the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Expenditure Plan section of the Climate Change Chapter.

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 \$2.9 billion (\$2 billion General Fund) and 8,735.1 positions for CAL FIRE.

In recent years, the state has made strategic investments to bolster the state's firefighting capabilities in light of the ongoing wildfire crisis. This has included adding more firefighters to provide surge capacity throughout the fire season and beyond based on fire conditions, increasing the number of year-round fire engines, and implementing enhanced technology such as wildfire prediction and modeling software and fire detection cameras.

However, the ongoing impacts of climate change on California's wildlands continue to drive critically dry fuel conditions and longer, more severe fire seasons. The Budget makes further investments to enhance CAL FIRE's fire prevention and suppression capacity.

- CAL FIRE Emergency Preparedness and Response: Additional Fire Crews—\$143.3 million one-time General Fund in 2021-22, \$124.5 million ongoing General Fund, and \$24.2 million one-time General Fund in out-years for related capital outlay costs for CAL FIRE and the California Conservation Corps (CCC) to support 30 additional fire crews, including 16 seasonal firefighter crews and 14 CCC crews. In recognition of the continuing climate impacts on fuel conditions and existing population trends in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's Conservation Camp program, these fire crews will enable CAL FIRE to respond to larger and more damaging wildfires throughout the fire season and complete priority fuel reduction projects to reduce wildfire risk in fire-threatened areas.
- Wildfire and Forest Resilience Strategy—The Budget also includes \$1 billion for a comprehensive package of resources to increase the pace and scale of forest health activities and decrease fire risk, including \$581 million for CAL FIRE in 2020-21 and 2021-22, as explained in the Climate Change Chapter.

Additionally, the Administration has initiated the integration of new firefighting aircraft into CAL FIRE's fleet to meet the challenges associated with increased wildfire activity. The Budget includes \$48.4 million to support the phasing in of these aircraft as quickly as possible to enhance CAL FIRE's ability to respond to wildfire incidents.

- **Black Hawk Helicopters**—The replacement of CAL FIRE's Vietnam War-era helicopter fleet with new technologically advanced S70i Black Hawk helicopters was initiated in 2017-18, and the 2020 Budget Act included funding to purchase the remaining 3 helicopters to complete the replacement of all 12 CAL FIRE helicopters. Three new Black Hawk helicopters have been deployed so far, and it is estimated that four more Black Hawk helicopters will be put into operation sometime during the 2021 fire season (for a total of seven). CAL FIRE expects to put the remaining five helicopters into operation in 2022.
- **Large Air Tankers**—The 2019 and 2020 Budget Acts included funding for CAL FIRE to phase in the seven large C-130H large air tankers that will be transferred from the federal government starting in 2021-22. The air tankers, currently owned by the U.S. Coast Guard, are being retrofitted by the U.S. Air Force utilizing \$150 million in federal funding. CAL FIRE is continuing to prepare for the arrival of these aircraft by training and certifying new dedicated flight crews and mechanics, and cross-training and certifying its existing pilots to fly the aircraft for maximum operational efficiency and effective wildland fire response. The Administration is actively working with its federal partners to meet the expected 2021-22 arrival of the aircraft.

The Budget also includes \$5 million one-time General Fund to provide a research grant to California State University, San Marcos to study enhanced firefighting equipment and strategies to protect firefighters from conditions present during wildfires in the wildland urban interface.

UTILITY WILDFIRE MITIGATION AND SAFETY

Chapter 81, Statutes of 2019 and Chapter 79, Statutes of 2019 established a new Wildfire Safety Division (Division) within the Public Utilities Commission effective January 1, 2020. In its first year, the Division has made significant progress towards fulfilling its mission of advancing long-term utility wildfire safety. This includes:

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- Reviewing and approving utility wildfire mitigation plans, issuing safety certificates to electrical utilities, conducting safety culture assessments, and performing its statutorily mandated oversight responsibilities.
- Developing a strategic roadmap, through a public process, to guide the work of the Division in collaboration with key stakeholders—including CAL FIRE, Cal OES, and the Forest Management Task Force.
- Drafting performance metrics to evaluate wildfire mitigation plans as well as a field audit program to monitor utilities' compliance with their plan.

These wildfire mitigation efforts will continue in collaboration with local, state, and federal partners to help the state reduce the risks associated with utility-caused wildfires.