



Napa County

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Legislation Text

File #: 23-1326, Version: 1

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Ryan J. Alsop, County Executive Officer
REPORT BY: Thomas Zeleny, Chief Deputy County Counsel
SUBJECT: Adoption of a Resolution Continuing the State of Local Emergency Due to Pervasive Tree Mortality

RECOMMENDATION

County Executive Officer requests adoption of a Resolution continuing the State of Local Emergency due to pervasive tree mortality in Napa County.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On September 13, 2022, the Board of Supervisors proclaimed a State of Local Emergency due to pervasive tree mortality in Napa County, pursuant to Resolution No. 2022-132. Government Code section 8630(c) requires local agencies to revisit proclamations of local emergency at least once every 60 days until the local emergency is terminated. If adopted by the Board, the proposed resolution will continue the State of Local Emergency due to pervasive tree mortality in Napa County, and extend the emergency powers of County officials as set forth in Resolution No. 2022-132.

On September 5, 2023, Napa County sent a letter to Congressman Thompson seeking federal support to manage the Mediterranean Oak Borer, one of the invasive species attacking native trees in Napa Valley. Napa County is seeking funding to understand the biology of this beetle, determine its spread, identify an effective means of management, and for removal and disposal of infected trees on public and private property.

FISCAL & STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT

Is there a Fiscal Impact?	No
Is it currently budgeted?	No
Is it Mandatory or Discretionary?	Discretionary
Discretionary Justification:	To seek and be eligible for state and federal assistance to address the emergency.
Is the general fund affected?	No
Future fiscal impact:	Staff cost of placing this item on the Board agenda every 60 days for renewal until termination.

Consequences if not approved: Pervasive tree mortality in Napa County could constitute a significant threat to the economic and environmental health and safety of persons and property due to increased risk of high intensity wildfire, diminished air quality, and overall quality of life for residents in Napa County.

County Strategic Plan pillar addressed: Vibrant and Sustainable Environment

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: This proposed activity is not subject to CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15060(c)(3) because the activity is not a project pursuant to section 15378, and because it will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment pursuant to section 15060(c)(2).

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

CalFire conducted aerial surveys of Napa and Lake Counties in December of 2021 and January of 2022. The surveys revealed widespread conifer mortality due to the ongoing drought, and additional tree mortality exacerbated by populations of bark beetles, as fire and drought-stressed conifers provide ideal host material for a bark beetle population to establish and grow. On July 12, 2022, the Board of Supervisors heard a presentation on local tree mortality from experts in both entomology and tree mortality, and directed staff to return with a proposed resolution declaring a state of local emergency due to pervasive tree mortality in Napa County.

On September 13, 2022, the Board of Supervisors proclaimed a State of Local Emergency due to pervasive tree mortality in Napa County, pursuant to Resolution No. 2022-132. Government Code section 8630(c) requires local agencies to revisit proclamations of local emergency at least once every 60 days until the local emergency is terminated. Pervasive tree mortality in Napa County continues to present a substantial risk of dead and dying trees fueling high intensity wildfires imperiling persons, structures, crops and wildlife, destroying watersheds with incredible ecological diversity, and releasing huge quantities of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere.

On September 5, 2023, Napa County sent a letter to Congressman Thompson seeking federal support to manage the Mediterranean Oak Borer, one of the invasive species attacking native trees in Napa Valley. The Mediterranean Oak Borer is a small beetle native to Europe, which has been discovered in Napa, Sonoma, Lake, and Sacramento Counties. According to University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources, female beetles tunnel into trees, usually at points where the bark is thin or cracked. The beetles introduce fungal spores inside their tunnels that grow in fungal “gardens.” The fungus is the primary food of the beetle larvae and adults, but the fungus may also damage or kill the tree over time. The trees associated with the 2019 finds of infestation in Calistoga showed symptoms including wilting, defoliation, and broken branches, and the infested wood was discolored, presumably by the fungus. Napa County is seeking funding to further understand the biology of this beetle, determine its spread, identify an effective means of management, and for removal and disposal of infected trees on public and private property.

During the State of Local Emergency, the powers, functions and duties of the Director of Emergency Services and the emergency organization of the County shall be those prescribed by state law, and by ordinance and resolution of Napa County. Continuing the State of Local Emergency also maintains the County's eligibility to receive mutual aid and other resources from the State or other local agencies.