

## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

March 28, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
President of the United States  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Through: Robert J. Fenton, Jr.  
Regional Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Agency Region IX  
1111 Broadway, Suite 1200  
Oakland, CA 94607-4052

Dear Mr. President,

Thank you once again for your expeditious approval of the State of California's emergency declaration request (EM-3592). The conditions in California continued to deteriorate due to the Winter Storms and ongoing Atmospheric River events (collectively, the Late Winter Storms event) that commenced February 21, 2023, and continues to overwhelm California through March. As such, under the provisions of Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5207 (Stafford Act), as implemented by 44 C.F.R. § 206.36, I respectfully request a Major Disaster Declaration for California's impacted counties, to include:

- All categories of Public Assistance for the following counties: Calaveras, Los Angeles, Monterey, and Tulare;
- All Individual Assistance programs for the following counties: Kern, Mariposa, Monterey, San Benito, Santa Cruz, Tulare, and Tuolumne;
- Any other appropriate Stafford Act disaster assistance programs;
- U.S. Small Business Administration disaster loans and funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Emergency Loan Program; and
- Hazard Mitigation statewide.

California reserves the right to amend this request to add additional counties for both Public Assistance (PA) and Individual Assistance (IA) as counties pivot from response to recovery from the Late Winter Storms Event and can commence assessing damage. Additionally, the State will be working closely with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the National Weather Service (NWS) to validate historical snow data.

Given the cumulative and compounding severe consequences of the Late Winter Storms event on top of the December-January Atmospheric River event, which was a federally declared major disaster (DR-4683), I specifically request a Major Disaster Declaration for California's impacted counties to include the following:

- 100 percent Federal cost share for PA Categories A and B (debris removal and emergency protective measures) for the first 90 days.

Pursuant to 44 CFR § 206.47(d), the State of California reserves the right to request a 90 percent Federal cost share to be placed into effect after the first 90 days. Additionally, pursuant to 44 C.F.R. § 206.47(b), California may request a 90 percent Federal cost share for all other categories of Public Assistance (Permanent Work Categories C-G). The State of California reserves the right to submit this request within the first 90 days of the major disaster declaration being issued.

## **I. CURRENT SITUATION AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

The ongoing Late Winter Storms event continues to impact the State, endangering lives and property while creating a disaster that is beyond the capabilities of State and local government. With critical infrastructure and homes damaged or destroyed, severe, near record, or record snowfall throughout California and in areas not accustomed to snow, and major flooding along population centers, the impacts have been and continue to be profound. The State of California has relentlessly been bombarded by storm after storm with little-to-no time to recover, which has tragically caused 9 known fatalities to date. As the historic snowpack begins to melt, it is anticipated that extended advanced planning will be necessary to respond to additional flood threats that may not be realized initially and could continue to be present during the spring snowmelt.

Operational areas of the State are still actively responding to this disaster as current flood risks continue to prevent flood waters from receding and hindering damage assessments from taking place. Additionally, rain and snow fall continue throughout California, and a new atmospheric river began impacting

California on March 28, further compounding the continuous rain and snow onslaught the State has seen this winter.

California has also experienced other severe weather effects like tornadoes due to the Late Winter Storms event. A tornado was confirmed on March 21 by NWS in the City of Carpinteria, Santa Barbara County, due to severe storms in the area<sup>1</sup>. The tornado began as a waterspout off the coast of California and moved onshore causing damage to over 25 properties at the Sandpiper Village. Damages include metal carports destroyed, windows broken, and multiple metal roofs ripped off resulting in 1 person injured. The tornado recorded wind speeds of 75 MPH, with a width of 25 yards, and lasted approximately 2 minutes.

On March 22, a second tornado, confirmed by NWS as an EF-1 Tornado, struck an industrial warehouse and commercial business district in the City of Montebello in Los Angeles County. The tornado's winds were recorded at 110 MPH, with a width of 50 yards, and lasted approximately 3 minutes. The tornado rapidly developed during severe storms and damaged over 17 structures, injuring 1. In addition, there was a near total roof collapse in one building, interior structural damages, car, tree damage, and snapped power poles. This was the first tornado to touchdown in the Los Angeles area since December of 2014 and the strongest since March of 1983. The tornado came on the heels of compounded damages already impacting the State. The tornado further exacerbated damage in Los Angeles County caused by previous storms in this Late Winter Storms event.

#### A. Current Situation

California has faced, and continues to face, persistent snowfall as well as heavy precipitation, high winds, and river and urban flooding across the State. The Late Winter Storms event has ravaged California since February 21, 2023. Having already saturated California with trillions of gallons of water, the event will continue to impact the State through, at least, the end of March.

At the peak of the event, the State recorded 1 location at danger stage, defined as being at risk for catastrophic flooding, and 16 locations reaching flood stage, the stage at which overflow of the natural banks or levees of a stream begins to cause damage in the local area from inundation (flooding). An additional 32 locations reached monitor stage, showing the amount of water above normal flow conditions.

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<sup>1</sup> See attached Table 1

To date, the flooding caused by this event has devastated communities throughout the State. On March 11, 2023, increased flows at the Pajaro River caused a 110-foot breach of the levee protecting the town of Pajaro, causing inundation. These impacts significantly affect residents and cause severe physical damage and economic hardship to property and community infrastructure. Additionally, Tulare County issued evacuation orders for the area near Porterville that impacted dozens of homes. Overnight on March 16, several breaches were reported on the Lake Success Dam. On March 17, the breaches were being repaired with assistance from helicopters delivering sandbags. Although the breaches continue to be under repair, the Lake Success Dam remains at high risk for overflowing and flooding into the nearby town of Porterville due to excessive debris buildup.

Mountain communities in the State have received record or near-record snowfall. For example, in San Bernardino County, the communities of Big Bear and Lake Arrowhead received record snowfall with totals of 64 inches of snow received within a 48-hour timeframe. This eclipsed the previous record of 60 inches. In Mono County, Lee Vining received near record snowfall for both its 2 and 3-day snowfall totals. This record snowfall has impacted the State's ability to provide direct assistance to thousands of individuals who had been stranded for over two weeks due to the tremendous amount of snow. The record snowfall made the roadways and hilltops of the mountain communities impassable, resulting in delays in the State's response and assistance. As a result, entire populations throughout the State had been cut off from ground access for nearly 2 weeks, due to the persistent snowfall. Basic essentials, such as food and medicine, were airlifted to these communities in an effort to assist the San Bernadino Mountain communities due to historic snowfall.



*Figure 1: Heavy snowfall in Crestline, CA on March 3, 2023.*

At the peak of the Late Winter Storms event, there were 70 road closures. As of March 27, 2023, 30 of the 70 roads that reported closures have no estimated time of reopening. Currently impacted routes include US Highway 395 in Mono and Inyo counties, State Route (SR) 18, 138, and 330 in San Bernardino County; SR 1 in Monterey, and San Luis Obispo counties; US Highway 101 in Santa Clara County; and Interstate 80 from Colfax, California to the Nevada state line. Routes such as US 395 have been closed for weeks due to snow and ice and still have no estimated time of reopening.

First responder services were hindered by road closures in many counties. In Calaveras County, many roads were closed due to damage, impacting Emergency Medical Services (EMS) response in some areas. Roads have also been impacted by storms in Tuolumne County, and while EMS was aware of available detours, it delayed response time. Mariposa County also reported that EMS response had been delayed due to highway and road damage. Additionally, Yosemite National Park had limited access to emergency vehicles due to reported avalanches and erosion. Although these initial delays appear to be resolved, incoming storms could threaten the already damaged roads and emergency response time.

## B. Emergency Response

Due to the sustained force and longevity of the Late Winter Storms event, local and State resources are strained and overwhelmed beyond the capabilities of

the State. On February 21, 2023, the State activated its State Operations Center (SOC) in preparation for the incoming storms. On March 9, 2023, the State activated the SOC at its highest level along with the Flood Operations Center (FOC). The SOC has remained fully activated at the highest level and is expected to continue to be fully staffed for the duration of the event. At the peak of the event, 44 out of 58 counties across the State activated their Emergency Operations Centers (EOC), along with numerous cities, local agencies, non-profit organizations, and private entities in response to the Late Winter Storms event<sup>2</sup>.

I have issued 5 separate proclamations over the course of this event, collectively declaring states of emergency in 47 counties. The proclamations include a variety of provisions in response to the Late Winter Storm event, including activation of the State Emergency Plan, mobilization of the National Guard, suspension of state law to facilitate emergency contracting, waiver of vital document replacement fees, providing flexibility for health care facilities, an unemployment insurance waiting period waiver, ordering the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to request assistance through the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) emergency relief program, and provision of state CDAA assistance, if appropriate, to eligible local governments.

Other California State resources activated and in use include the California Department of Water Resources, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, the California Conservation Corps, the California Department of Transportation, the California Health and Human Services Agency, and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. As this is a federally declared emergency, California has drawn on the resources of its federal partners including FEMA, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the U.S. Geologic Survey.

At the height of the response, and to support urgent resource requests from 21 counties, critical resources were deployed to conduct ongoing lifesaving efforts, including nearly half a million sandbags and plastic sheeting, flood fight specialists, 48 High-Water Vehicles, 125 California National Guard service members, 3 helicopters, and 2 flood fight containers. The State responded to meal requests for delivery to emergency shelters assisting with evacuations in the mountain communities. The Department of General Services (DGS) has been providing 24-hour procurement of goods and services to assist in the response to storms and flooding including, sandbags, security guard services, accessible and functional needs showers, fuel, firewood and additional shelter

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<sup>2</sup> See Table 3 Attached.

support services. In San Bernardino County, the State assisted with the delivery of essential propane and fuel to maintain generators, and emergency equipment. However, in Mono and Inyo Counties, snowfall totals prevented propane deliveries to major towns due to road closures and impassable roads. In addition, the State provided 5 hand crews, 7 snow blowers and front loaders, 3 helicopters, 2 heavy equipment teams, 2 Snow Cats for extraction, and dozens of Snow Shovels to assist in snow removal. Caltrans has mobilized 4,000 crew members statewide, working 24/7 shifts to keep roads open and quickly respond to emergencies.

During the peak of the event, on March 14, there were 30 active prepositions across the state, including 33 Cal OES Engines, 93 Local Government Engines, 4 Local Government Helicopters, 208 Hand Crews, Dispatchers, IMT Members, and Swiftwater/US&R Rescue Teams.

As of March 24, there were 295 rescues reported in Monterey County, 12 in Mariposa County, 10 in Kern County, 4 in El Dorado County, 2 in Calaveras County, 1 in San Bernardino County, and 1 in Stanislaus County. This makes the total number of individuals rescued due to flooding and snow 325 across the State of California. In Inyo County, 2 additional swift water rescue teams were prepositioned from San Diego and Riverside to provide assistance due to rising flood concerns. Heavy equipment operations also are providing support for snow removal and aiding in the preservation of life and property.

The American Red Cross and California Department of Social Services are currently supporting shelter efforts across the State, which include 30 congregate shelters in 13 counties. As a result of your declaration of an emergency, FEMA is also supporting sheltering operations in the State and has prepositioned supplies and life saving measures in Fresno, Bakersfield, and Santa Barbara. On March 14, the peak of evacuation warnings and orders, there were 51,637 people under evacuation warnings and more than 25,000 people under evacuation orders due to storms moving throughout the State and causing detrimental flooding, wind, rain, and snow impacts. On March 15, the peak shelter numbers were recorded at 31 Congregate Shelters, with 616 people sheltered, and 8 Non-Congregate Shelters, with 60 people sheltered. In addition, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) is currently assisting dairies in Fresno, Tulare, Kings, and Stanislaus counties to evaluate animal evacuation needs. At the height of the Late Winter Storms event, there were 11 open animal shelters at fairgrounds throughout the State to assist with evacuation, sheltering, and/or staging needs.

## II. IMPACTS TO POPULATION AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Due to the ongoing devastation of the Late Winter Storms event, the State is actively gathering information and data related to the impacts to populations throughout California. The following highlights the most critical impacts felt across the State, as well as major projected impacts based on recent reports.

### A. Uninsured Home and Property Losses

This disaster is putting a tremendous strain on the fiscal resiliency of the State's population and exacerbating pre-existing social vulnerabilities throughout the impacted counties, as over half the counties with concurred FEMA State Joint Preliminary Damage Assessments (Joint-PDAs) rank moderate to high on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Social Vulnerability Index (SVI). In most counties harmed by the Late Winter Storms event, only 5 percent of residents have flood insurance. Furthermore, of the subject counties, at least 30 percent of the population lacks homeowners or personal property insurance, demonstrating that the impacted populations will require immediate and effective assistance to support expedited recovery.<sup>3</sup>

According to initial Joint-PDAs conducted with FEMA,<sup>4</sup> 42 homes and businesses have been destroyed, 378 have suffered major damage, 171 have suffered minor damage, and 87 have been affected by heavy flooding. However, these Joint-PDAs are currently ongoing and do not show the entirety of all IA damages in the numbers provided. The estimated private property loss for this event thus far totals \$329,638,502, although this number is expected to rise. These numbers are expected to increase exponentially as communities continue to respond to the latest atmospheric river impacts, more damage is revealed, and more Joint-PDAs are conducted.

### Central Coast

**Monterey County:** Flood impacts to Monterey County's population have been particularly devastating. At the peak of the levee breach, more than 33,000 individuals were under evacuation orders or warnings due to the major, life-threatening flooding in the area. This includes the most recent levee breach and flooding along the Pajaro River, which has greatly harmed the unincorporated communities of Pajaro and Spreckels and caused more than 1,700 residents—

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<sup>3</sup> See Table 1 and Table 2 attached.

<sup>4</sup> Fresno, Kern, Mariposa, Monterey, Nevada, San Benito, Santa Cruz, Tulare, and Tuolumne.



many of them low-income families—to evacuate their homes. According to income data provided by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), approximately 27 percent of households in the unincorporated county were lower income households.

In Monterey County, approximately 44% lack homeowner's or personal property insurance and less than 5% have flood insurance. IA Joint-PDAs report 200 homes have suffered major damage or have been destroyed. However, many more properties are predicted to be affected or damaged given projected river flows and ongoing storms. In addition, Monterey County is reporting agricultural losses exceeding \$450.5 million. As one of the largest producers of produce in the United States, the economic consequences of this disaster will heavily affect the local economy and thereby the State economy.



*Pajaro, Monterey Residential Debris Recorded March 27, 2023*

While the Joint-PDAs report 200 homes with major damage or destroyed, it is important to note that the impacts to the community far exceed the reported concurred Joint-PDA numbers. Nearly every home in Pajaro has been impacted, even those that do not have high water marks or were not reported as damaged by the Joint-PDAs. Community members and non-profit organizations are removing debris from in and around homes and will likely remain doing so for an extended period of time. Such large amounts of debris have been generated as a result of the storms and levee breach that after the first day of

re-entry, shelter numbers in Pajaro remained the same, as it was incredibly hazardous for community members to remain in their homes.

The effects on the population of Monterey County remain significant as the county is also considered highly vulnerable to recent disaster impacts, ranking in the 82<sup>nd</sup> percentile for overall social vulnerability. Because the impacted communities have a relatively low median household income and a high percentage of renters, many individuals and households are subject to an increased vulnerability to displacement.



*Figure 1: Levee Breach in Pajaro, CA caused catastrophic damage to homes on March 11, 2023*

**San Benito County:** In San Benito County, over 38% of the population lacks homeowners or personal property insurance and less than 5% have flood insurance. Further, 39% of all households in the county are considered extremely low, very low, or low-income. Joint-PDAs report 6 homes have been destroyed, 31 have suffered major damage, 20 have suffered minor damage, and 5 have been affected. San Benito also reported agricultural losses in excess of \$3 million, directly impacting the local economy through crop loss and unemployment rise.

Additionally, San Benito County ranks in the 78<sup>th</sup> percentile with regard to their socioeconomic vulnerabilities (i.e., a significant segment of their population fall below the 150% poverty level, are unemployed, experience housing insecurity, have no high school diploma, and/or lack health insurance), and in the 77<sup>th</sup> percentile for racial and ethnic minority status, with a large percentage of Latino residents who may face increased vulnerability due to language barriers and limited access to resources.

**Santa Cruz County:** The county has suffered greatly after numerous tragic disasters have struck the area in recent years. Currently, the county is continuing to suffer from the impacts of high flood waters, heavy rain, and high winds contributing to downed trees and power lines and thereby, damaging homes and businesses. The Santa Cruz Mountains received snowfall which later contributed to the severe flood impacts the county is currently facing. Joint-PDAs were conducted with FEMA and concurred on the following damage: 7 destroyed homes and businesses, 26 suffered major damages, 10 minor, and 5 affected. Within the county, approximately 33% of the population lacks homeowners and personal property insurance and only 4.6% of the population carries flood insurance. The county will see significant impacts to long-term recovery as the lack of both homeowner's and flood insurance will only contribute to delayed rebuilding and repairs to homes and businesses.

### **San Joaquin Valley**

**Kern County:** Due to heavy rain and flooding, evacuation orders for over 7,000 residents were issued for the county, including the cities of Kernville and McFarland, as well as additional homes along the Kern River. At the apex of the storm, the Kern River rose to 17 feet, causing river water to flow into wells servicing the Frontier Trails Homeowners Association (HOA). Additionally, the heaving flooding completely inundated a mobile home park. Joint-PDAs report 10 homes have been destroyed, 16 have suffered major damage, 61 have suffered minor damage, and 29 have been affected. Additionally, the county is also estimating agricultural losses of approximately \$72 million.

Within the county, approximately 35% lack homeowners or personal property insurance and 5% have flood insurance. Furthermore, 49% of all households in the county are considered extremely low-, very low- or low-income; and Kern County is considered to be highly socially vulnerable, ranking in the 94<sup>th</sup> percentile for overall social vulnerability.

Kern County has a significant segment of their population experiencing high levels of housing insecurity and increased vulnerability due to language barriers and limited access to resources. Because Kern County also has significant numbers of multi-unit structures, mobile homes, and individuals living in group quarters, they are more susceptible to the latest disaster impacts. These impacts are directly affecting the availability of new housing resources which will now be significantly strained while recovery commences.

**Tulare County:** At the height of response, the event, over 4,000 evacuation orders and over 9,000 evacuation warnings had been issued for the county as a

result of flooding. Joint-PDAs conducted with FEMA concurred on the following damages, 2 homes have been destroyed, 101 have suffered major damage, 52 have suffered minor damage, and 21 have been affected. Within Tulare, approximately 32% lack homeowner's or personal property insurance and less than 5% have flood insurance.

Most significantly, the county is ranked in the 92<sup>nd</sup> percentile for overall social vulnerability, and within California, their population ranks the most vulnerable in terms of their socioeconomic status factor (i.e., a significant segment of their population falls below the 150% poverty level, are unemployed, experience housing insecurity, have no high school diploma, and/or lack health insurance). Additionally, like Fresno and Kern, Tulare County also has a significant percentage resident who may face increased vulnerability due to language barriers and limited access to resources. Agricultural losses are currently estimated at \$60 million due to extensive flooding of crop fields as reported in the county's Initial Damage Estimate (IDE). Due to increased agricultural losses, Tulare County will continue to see impacts throughout their local economy including an increase in the unemployment rate.

### **Sierra Foothills**

**Mariposa County:** As storms moved through Mariposa County, evacuations were issued for several areas, including those that had been previously harmed by the Oak Fire. Joint-PDAs report 12 homes have been destroyed, 12 have suffered major damage, 15 have suffered minor damage, and 4 have been affected.

Within the county, over 28% of the population lacks homeowners or personal property insurance and less than 5% have flood insurance. Furthermore, 49% of all households in the county are considered extremely low, very low, or low-income; and Mariposa County exhibits a relatively high social vulnerability in terms of their household characteristics (i.e., a significant segment of its population is aged 65 or older or 17 and younger, experience a disability, are single-parent households, and/or have low English language proficiency), indicating a more challenging road to recovery for these impacted communities.

**Tuolumne County:** Due to severe flooding in the area, the county's residents have been largely impacted through home and business damages. Joint-PDAs conducted with FEMA concurred on the following damages, 11 homes and businesses destroyed, 16 suffered major damaged, 10 minor damage, and 11 have been affected. Furthermore, approximately 32% of the population lacks homeowner's and personal property insurance and less than 5% have flood insurance. With the lack of flood insurance, most residents impacted will be

unable to repair, replace, or rebuild their homes and businesses due to the loss of insurance proceeds. The communities largely affected will struggle to recover long-term as the lack of assistance provides an inadequate and helpless path forward for individuals, families, and businesses.

## **Southern**

**Mono County:** At the peak of the storm, the county experienced a complete outage of their 911 emergency phone line system to provide emergency services to their community. Although the outage of the emergency phone line system has been resolved, Mono County continues to face obstacles. For example, the U.S. Postal Service has been challenged to deliver mail, including needed prescriptions to residents in Bridgeport, Mono City, and June Lake. Additionally, at least, four complete or partial roof collapses were reported on March 14. The county also reported potential structural damage to commercial structures in Mammoth Lakes as a result of snow loading. Significant snow and debris removal activities are being conducted in order to restore access and egress routes. In the areas of Mono City, June Lake, and Mammoth Lakes, there has been over 800 truckloads of snow removed within a 3-day period. Currently IDEs are being received and PDAs are anticipated. Due to the heavy snow totals, many areas of the county are currently inaccessible for PDAs to be conducted. The State expects to conduct Joint-PDAs with FEMA once accessibility has been restored and true damages realized.

**San Bernardino County:** San Bernardino Mountain communities, including Big Bear Lake, have suffered greatly as a result of historic snowfall and rain-on-snow events, inundating homes, businesses, and causing road closures. Reports from the communities indicate significant numbers of destroyed homes due to roof collapses caused by rain on snow loads. IDEs report, 70 homes and businesses have been destroyed, 46 have suffered major damage, 148 have suffered minor damage, and 112 have been affected. Joint-PDAs are currently tentatively scheduled and will be completed in the near future.

San Bernardino County communities are considered highly vulnerable to impacts caused by the snow on rain event, ranking in the 84<sup>th</sup> percentile for overall social vulnerability. Within the county, approximately 39% of the population lacks homeowners or personal property insurance and less than 5% have flood insurance. Furthermore, about 80% of housing units in Big Bear Lake were built prior to 1990 and are more than 30 years old, indicating an increased vulnerability to flood damage. According to current parcel-level data obtained from the US Census American Community Survey (2020), less than 1% of

properties within the county are considered vacant for recreational or seasonal purposes (i.e., secondary homes).

While Joint-PDAs are still in process in the counties requested above for Individual Assistance, and as the State continues to demonstrate damage totals meet thresholds, federal assistance remains a critical component to community long-term recovery. Not only are these impacted counties among the most socioeconomically disadvantaged in the State, but they have been severely and persistently devastated by extreme weather events since December of 2022.

Most significantly, the safety net that exists for the state's wealthier, more insured communities, with greater housing and job security, does not exist as a short- or long-term recovery solution for these disaster survivors, only further impacting the most vulnerable individuals and families. Flood insurance rates of the impacted counties, on average, hover around 5%; and high percentages of these communities do not have homeowner's or personal property insurance or are severely underinsured. This lack of insurance, compounded by the low socioeconomic status of the communities identified in this request, strongly suggests that these vulnerable individuals and households have little to no ability to afford repairs to their homes and/or personal property losses.

In areas such as Monterey County (a county that ranks in the 82<sup>nd</sup> percentile for overall social vulnerability), major agricultural losses of the county's largest exports, including lettuce, broccoli, and strawberries, will cripple the local economies, significantly increase unemployment, and both perpetuate and exacerbate the socioeconomic conditions individuals and families are already facing.<sup>5</sup>

As California continues to assess winter storms and flooding impacts to these highly vulnerable communities, it is evident that both state and federal assistance will be needed to support their road to recovery. Pre-existing hardships, disproportionately affecting communities within these impacted counties, have only been intensified by recent events and require an equitable solution that provides for current and future challenges. As such, I strongly advocate for these communities, and our shared constituents, to receive the federal support they need.

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<sup>5</sup> Annual Crop Report | Monterey County Farm Bureau ([montereycfb.com](http://montereycfb.com))

## B. Impact to Community Infrastructure

Due to the rapid and ongoing nature of this disaster and the exhaustion of State and local resources, IDEs for the respective counties are projecting to be well above the Statewide Public Assistance Indicator. Currently, the State estimates damages of \$156,007,712 in Categories A and B and \$368,270,296 in Categories C-G, far exceeding the State Public Assistance indicator of \$4.44 per capita for a Statewide threshold of \$69,982,655. These numbers are expected to significantly increase as additional counties provide updated IDE numbers and FEMA concurrence is reached. Many of the counties hardest hit are still trying to assess damages and are actively performing life saving measures which have delayed the IDE collection.

While 47 counties are currently under a State of Emergency, the State has included the most impacted counties IDEs and concurred Joint-PDA totals based on PA Category A and B costs, to demonstrate the current impacts being presently reported. The costs associated with this request have been confirmed from the local jurisdictions and the State will continue to perform Joint-PDAs as required by FEMA and the Stafford Act.

In Calaveras, Los Angeles, Monterey, and Tulare counties, as well as various impacted State Agencies, there is a total FEMA concurred cost of \$92,202,376. These numbers demonstrate the magnitude of this disaster as only 4 counties have been presented here with an additional 43 counties still reporting damages not accounted for in the above amount. The State damage estimates conclude the severity of impacts far exceed the State indicator achieving this with only 4 counties.

In addition, the State proposes Joint-PDAs continue to be conducted with FEMA based on the PA IDEs received from local jurisdictions. However, due to the urgency and need to attend to the preservation of life and property, the State is immediately requesting Federal Assistance to provide relief for those most impacted by this disaster.

FEMA and the State are in the process of conducting PA Joint-PDAs for eligible Emergency Work and Permanent Work. However, ongoing significant storms along with rising waters in the State's rivers, levees, and reservoir systems continue to cause increased and new damages statewide. Although the State's indicator has been exceeded in the above identified counties, damages continue to be documented and validated with FEMA which could lead to additional requests for Public Assistance approval in other counties or for categories not previously authorized. The State will continue to work closely with

FEMA to organize, validate, and expedite these additional requests in a timely fashion.

**Calaveras County:** The County sustained damage to multiple roads providing vital road access to homes and businesses. On Dog Town Road in San Andreas, a 7 by 9 by 15-foot-deep sinkhole emerged after soil saturation eroded the earth below and gave out. In addition, a 75-foot pine tree next to the sinkhole has the potential to contribute to catastrophic damages to the roadway and possible injuries to travelers and livestock. Elsewhere in the County a box culvert sustained heavy structural damage as visible cracks were observed within the concrete. The box culvert is a main throughfare for vehicle traffic preventing up to 3,500 residents from traveling through this area. In addition, with the damage and closure of the road, residents are forced to use a secondary road which adds on approximately 16 miles to these residents' commute. Essential and emergency services are also affected by preventing a quick and efficient way for these residents, posing a great risk to their lives and safety. The County reported an IDE amount of \$2,704,213 of which \$637,000 FEMA has concurred with representing a per capita indicator of \$14.08 per individual.

**Los Angeles County:** Los Angeles County received significant damages to their reservoir retainment network, contributing an initial estimated damage cost of \$66,309,560. The depositing of debris and sediment into 7 of the County's reservoirs has further threatened the operability of outlets of multiple dams, reducing the capacity for flood protection of the area. Additionally, these reservoirs sustained erosion and sinkholes within the earth and rockfill embankment compromising structural integrity of the embankment. FEMA concurred with Los Angeles County's costs totaling \$60,142,200 which equates to 87% of the total Statewide indicator and a per capita cost of \$6.28 per individual.

**Tulare County:** In Tulare County, the Shafer Dam has been actively spilling water at an estimated outflow of 6,000 Cubic Feet per Second (CFS) which at its peak reached a height as 12,500 CFS on March 15. In addition, an evacuation order was issued on March 15 for the Porterville area including all homes, business, and structures on both sides of the Tulare River, due to water levels rising in Success Lake. The dam is also filled with vegetative debris such as branches and logs which, if subject of spillover, could damage downstream infrastructure or cause flooding due to blockages. Additionally, the Springville wastewater treatment plant suffered a catastrophic failure resulting in the release of sewage and requiring crews to hand-pump raw sewage into a pond basin temporarily. The pond basin is at high risk for overflowing which would result in sewage spreading



across the community via the floodwaters. Based on preliminary IDE numbers received of Category A-G costs \$8,190,425 were concurred with FEMA. The concurred amounts exceed the Countywide indicator by \$17.31 per individual.

**Monterey:** Based on the initial Joint-PDAs, FEMA has concurred \$2,355,138 in Category B (Emergency Protective Measures). Due to the ongoing response efforts, the county has only begun to realize the significant damage to essential community infrastructure. A significant contributor to the damages occurred early on March 11, when the Pajaro River levee breached causing immense damage to the community's sewer system, water supply, and roadways. The sewer system was damaged as a direct result from storms and flooding beginning the date of the levee breach until Saturday, March 25, 2023. As a result, 12 vacuum tank trucks were deployed, and being utilized on a continuous basis until March 24, 2023, to remove the sewage from the community and transport it to the nearby wastewater treatment facility. Although the water system is in working order, the potable water within the community is not fit for consumption and the community continues to remain on a boil water notice. As a result, the State has deployed 2 water tenders to Monterey County beginning March 26 to provide safe drinking water to the community.

## **Statewide**

### **Power Outages**

During the recent series of atmospheric rivers, on March 13, 2023, the State experienced over 380,000 power outages. In particular, outages in Santa Clara and Monterey counties caused included over 50% of the local population. These power outages were a result of high winds in this series of storms which caused massive outages and were challenging to restore due to flooding and access issues.

### **Schools**

School closures, during the peak of the event on March 14, included 219 schools impacting over 102,044 students.

The Three Rivers Elementary School, located in Tulare County, experienced a water main break, which was subsequently inundated by flood waters, resulting in a Do Not Drink water notice. The school remains closed due to flooding. Pajaro Middle School, located in Monterey County, is closed due to flooding and damage assessments are pending as the site is still an area of active flooding. Additional damages to schools throughout the impacted areas are

likely to be further identified as flood waters and heavy snowfall continue to recede.

### **III. STATE FISCAL IMPACTS**

During an emergency, Cal OES functions as the Governor's immediate staff to provide guidance and coordinate the state's responsibilities under the Emergency Services Act and applicable federal statute. Cal OES ensures effective disaster response and recovery by managing multi-jurisdictional efforts among local, state, tribal, and federal entities, as well as non-governmental, nonprofit, and private organizations. Cal OES also acts as the conduit for state and federal assistance through grants and federal agency support.

The California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA) authorizes Cal OES to administer a disaster assistance program that provides financial assistance from the state for costs incurred by local governments as a result of a disaster event. CDAA provides for the reimbursement of local government costs including funding for the repair, restoration, or replacement of public real property damaged or destroyed by a disaster. The CDAA baseline funding each year has continued to increase as a result of the frequency and duration of disaster events to cover local government costs. Specifically, for the last three state fiscal years, California has invested \$100.8 million, \$162.6 million, and \$176.6 million in state fiscal years 2020-2021 through 2022-2023 respectively.

The State's 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 budgets committed \$8.7 billion over multiple years to support drought resilience and response designed to help communities and fish and wildlife avoid immediate negative impacts as a result of extreme drought, while continuing to advance projects and programs that prepare the State to be more resilient to future droughts and floods. In 2023-24, I proposed to maintain \$8.6 billion in funding to minimize the immediate economic and environmental damage from the current drought and support hundreds of local water projects to prepare for and be more resilient to future droughts.

Beyond disaster response and recovery, the State has invested \$10.2 billion in 2022-23 in homelessness programs and response, including resources to provide long-term permanent housing options, services, and supports for individuals

experiencing homelessness, or who are at risk of experiencing homelessness. My budget proposes to maintain these investments in 2023-24.

Since 2019, California has supported humanitarian services for migrants released from short-term federal custody in the border region. These services were expanded in 2021 given changing federal policies and public health needs related to COVID-19. California's national model of care and community partnership provides screening, support services, temporary shelter, and onward travel coordination for migrants so they may safely continue with their immigration proceedings at their destination in the U.S. The California model prioritizes the state's border communities and the well-being of migrants. No state has invested more than California in these humanitarian efforts: the state has spent \$1 billion over the last three years funding services and resources for migrants and border communities.

Currently, the state tax revenue outlook highlighted in the 2022 Budget has been realized—continued high inflation, multiple federal reserve bank interest rate increases, and further stock market declines. This last risk is particularly important to California, as market-based compensation—including stock options and bonus payments—greatly influences the incomes of high-income Californians. Combined with a progressive income tax structure, this can have an outsized effect, both good and bad, on state revenues.

Given these developments, the revenue outlook is substantially different than seen in the last two years. Prior to accounting for solutions, my Budget forecasts General Fund revenues will be \$29.5 billion lower than at the 2022 Budget Act

projections, and California now faces an estimated budget gap of \$22.5 billion in the 2023-24 fiscal year. In order to bridge that gap, I am proposing funding delays, programs reductions or pullbacks, fund shifts, and limited revenue generation and borrowing.

#### **IV. CERTIFICATION**

I certify for this Major Disaster Declaration request that the State and local governments will assume all applicable non-federal shared costs as required by the Stafford Act.

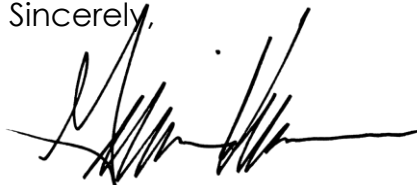
#### **V. STATE COORDINATING OFFICERS AND AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVES**

I have designated the Director of the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, Nancy Ward, as the Governor's Authorized Representative (GAR) and State Coordinating Officer for this request. Director Ward is empowered to execute on behalf of the State all necessary documents for federal assistance, including claims for Public Assistance, and will work with FEMA in continuing to provide more information or justification on my behalf.

#### **VI. CONCLUSION**

California continues to recover from multiple, consecutive disasters that warranted and received emergency declarations and major disaster declarations, as seen in the enclosed list. Now, due to the damage caused by the Late Winter Storms event's effects, including flooding, mud and debris flows, and avalanches throughout California and the cumulative and compounding impacts of these storm systems, I am requesting a Major Disaster Declaration for the counties set forth above with all categories of Public Assistance and programs of Individual Assistance, including any other appropriate Stafford Act disaster assistance programs, U.S. Small Business Administration disaster loans, funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Emergency Loan Program, and Hazard Mitigation Statewide. California is continuing to be trampled by winter weather and federal disaster assistance and individual and household program assistance is necessary for disaster survivors and the State's long-term recovery.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gavin Newsom', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Gavin Newsom  
Governor of California