

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF LAKE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

PROCLAMATION OF THE EXISTENCE OF A LOCAL EMERGENCY DUE TO PERVASIVE TREE MORTALITY  
RESOLUTION NO. 2022 –61

WHEREAS, California is subject to a declared State of Emergency arising from ongoing drought conditions; and

WHEREAS, On March 28, 2022 Governor Newsom issued Executive Order No. 7-77, to provide guidance on emergency drought relief. The executive order (EO) states that the “21st century to date has been characterized by record warmth and predominantly dry conditions, and the 2021 meteorological summer in California and the rest of the western United States was the hottest on record” and “the ongoing drought will have significant, immediate impacts on communities with vulnerable water supplies, farms that rely on irrigation to grow food and fiber, and fish and wildlife that rely on stream flows and cool water”; and

WHEREAS, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection has found that its aerial and ground surveys in Napa and Lake Counties in December of 2021 and January of 2022 revealed widespread conifer mortality, that the current drought is reducing the vigor and health of conifers in Lake County leaving the trees vulnerable to insect attack, and that fire damage, specifically scorching of bark and cambium, can continue to kill trees for five years or more after the fire event; and

WHEREAS, the Lake County Tree Mortality Task Force has been established to review, investigate and address the extensive incidents of tree mortality in the County caused primarily by wildfire, drought, and insect damage; and

WHEREAS, that task force has had the benefit of presentations from those with considerable expertise in both entomology and tree mortality, including the University of California Cooperative Extension Forest Advisor for Lake, Dr. Michael Jones, who is also an entomologist; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Jones, who has been monitoring conifer mortality in Lake County for the past several years, has found that Lake County is presently experiencing significant conifer mortality due to an outbreak of several species of native bark beetles. Fire-stressed conifers provide ideal host material for a bark beetle population to establish and grow and drought conditions likely helped the infestation spread from the burned areas as water-stressed trees with low vigor became more susceptible to bark beetle attacks; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Jones further found that at the present state of infestation, management should focus on mitigating hazards by removing the dead trees. The failure to remove a significant amount of the dead trees could result in the potential loss or degradation of forest habitats and associated ecological impacts, including the impact to wildlife, water, and soil. The extensive tree mortality may also impact carbon sequestration and storage capacity and Lake County forests. Extensive tree mortality may also impact the ability to manage for timber resources; and

WHEREAS, the pervasive tree mortality in Lake County could lead to high intensity wildfire, with extreme behavior at local and landscape level scales in the County and therefore constitutes an extreme threat to the safety of persons and property; and

WHEREAS, this unprecedented tree mortality will adversely affect watersheds that have incredible ecological diversity, high economic importance, and supply water to the largest natural freshwater lake in California and dramatically increase the risk of large wildfires, diminish air quality, and result in increased mortality rates for wildlife; and

WHEREAS, existing passive management, low income communities with limited capacity and resources facilitating active management restrictions on fuels reduction, and limitations on timber exports on public lands have led to overgrowth which creates dangerous wildfire conditions, which danger is exacerbated by the ongoing drought and insect infestation; and

WHEREAS, the removal of dead and dying trees is necessary to public health and safety, protect and maintain watersheds and wildlife habitat, protect and restore forest resiliency, and protect the continued economic development of Lake County through tourism and the creation of jobs; and

WHEREAS, California Government Code section 8630 empowers the Board of Supervisors to proclaim the existence of a local emergency when the County is threatened or likely to be threatened by the conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property that are or are likely to be beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment, and facilities of this County; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors hereby finds that conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property presently exist in Lake County, caused by the widespread and rapidly increasing incidence of tree mortality; and

WHEREAS, the magnitude of pervasive tree mortality represents a threat that is beyond the capacity of County resources such that assistance is required from both State and Federal agencies; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors does find that the aforesaid conditions and the breadth of the peril the County and its residents face as a result require the Proclamation of Local Emergency and that local resources are unable to cope with the effects of the significant danger.

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY PROCLAIMED that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Lake hereby declares the existence of a local emergency and said emergency shall be deemed to continue until its termination is declared by the Board of Supervisors:

BE IT FURTHER PROCLAIMED that this Proclamation is issued pursuant to the California Emergency Services Act, Government Code sections 8550, et seq. and proclaimed and ordered that during the existence of said local emergency, the powers, function, and duties of the emergency organization of Lake County shall be those prescribed by state and local law, County resolutions, and the County of Lake Operational Area Emergency Operations Plan, as approved by the Board of Supervisors.

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS HEREBY MAKES THE FOLLOWING REQUESTS:

1. That the Governor proclaim a State of Emergency in Lake County and other afflicted areas of the State;
2. That the Governor seek designation of tree mortality areas within Lake County and other afflicted areas of the State under Section 8204 of the Agriculture Act of 2014 (insect and disease areas) and seek additional Federal program support;

3. That the Governor request a Presidential Declaration of Emergency or Major Disaster for this emergency.

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS HEREBY ORDERS that a copy of this Proclamation be forwarded to the State Director of the Office of Emergency Services.

This Proclamation was duly passed by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Lake at a regular meeting held on May 3, 2022 by the following roll call vote:

AYES: Supervisor Simon, Sabatier, Scott, Pyska, and Crandell

NOES: None

ABSENT OF NOT VOTING: None

COUNTY OF LAKE

  
Eddie Crandell (May 11, 2022 09:54 PDT)

CHAIR, Board of Supervisors



ATTEST: SUSAN PARKER

Interim Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

  
By: Johanna DeLong (May 11, 2022 10:04 PDT)

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

ANITA L. GRANT

County Counsel

  
By: Anita L. Grant (Apr 29, 2022 13:16 PDT)