

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT STATE OF CALIFORNIA

PROCLAMATION OF A STATE OF EMERGENCY

WHEREAS in October 2015, Governor Brown proclaimed a State of Emergency to exist in California due to a vast tree die-off throughout the state, which increased the risk of wildfires; and

WHEREAS this tree die-off has continued to worsen forest conditions, creating extremely dangerous fire risk; and

WHEREAS in March 2019, I proclaimed a State of Emergency to exist in California due to catastrophic wildfire risks created by forest conditions, facilitating the completion of high-priority forest management projects through suspensions of various permitting and environmental review provisions; and

WHEREAS wildfires in California have grown in size, duration, and destructiveness because increasing whiplash between periods of extreme rain and extreme drought has caused accumulation of fuels in the State's forests, the majority of which are owned and managed by the federal government; and

WHEREAS several of the most costly fires have occurred in the Wildland Urban Interface, including most recently the January 2025 firestorms in Los Angeles County; and

WHEREAS there are millions of housing units in the Wildland Urban Interface, and the majority of these structures reside in high or very high fire hazard severity zones, and immediate action is needed to prevent similar wildfires in the imminent future; and

WHEREAS because of these conditions, the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection developed the California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP) in 2019, to streamline environmental review of vegetation management projects through reliance on a programmatic environmental impact report covering 20 million acres of the State; and

WHEREAS 106 projects have been approved to date under CalVTP, including prescribed burns, mechanical treatment, manual treatment, herbicide application, and prescribed herbivory projects; and

WHEREAS even with the success of CalVTP, more is needed to expedite critical fuels reduction projects in more areas of the State, including those not yet covered by CalVTP, to protect the lives and property of Californians; and

WHEREAS certain statutory, regulatory, and administrative requirements, including, but not limited to, studies, publication periods, and season-specific surveys, significantly impede State and local agencies' ability to immediately permit and implement necessary projects to protect the lives and property of Californians; and

WHEREAS under the provisions of Government Code section 8558(b), I find that the circumstances of the catastrophic wildfire risks created by forest

conditions across the state, by reason of their magnitude, are beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment, and facilities of any single local government and require the combined forces of a mutual aid region or regions to combat; and

WHEREAS under the provisions of Government Code section 8558(b), I find that conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property exist within the State of California due to these conditions; and

WHEREAS under the provision of Government Code section 8625, I find that local authorities lack the resources needed to cope with the emergency; and

WHEREAS under the provisions of Government Code section 8571, I find that strict compliance with various statutes and regulations specified in this order would prevent, hinder, or delay the mitigation of the effects of the catastrophic wildfire risks created by forest conditions across the state.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor of the State of California, in accordance with the authority vested in me by the State Constitution and statutes, including the California Emergency Services Act, and in particular, Government Code section 8625, **HEREBY PROCLAIM A STATE OF EMERGENCY** to exist within the State of California due to these conditions.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

1. All agencies of the state government utilize and employ state personnel, equipment, and facilities for the performance of any and all activities consistent with the State Emergency Plan. Also, all residents are to obey the direction of emergency officials with regard to this emergency in order to protect their safety.
2. State statutes, rules, regulations, and requirements that fall within the jurisdiction of boards, departments, and offices within the California Environmental Protection Agency and the California Natural Resources Agency are hereby suspended to the extent necessary for expediting critical fuels reduction projects, as defined in Paragraph 4, are initiated this calendar year, and that the suspension is approved by the appropriate Agency secretary as provided in Paragraph 3, and subject to Paragraph 5. Laws suspended by this paragraph include, but are not limited to, the California Environmental Quality Act (Division 13 (commencing with section 21000) of the Public Resources Code and regulations adopted pursuant to that Division) and the California Coastal Act (Division 20 of the Public Resources Code, commencing with section 30000, and regulations adopted pursuant to that Division).
3. Individuals or entities who desire to conduct activities under the suspension of statutes, rules, regulations, and requirements specified in Paragraph 2 shall first request that the appropriate Agency Secretary, or the Secretary's designee, make a determination that the proposed activities are eligible to be conducted under the suspension. The Secretary of the California Environmental Protection Agency and the Secretary of the California Natural Resources Agency shall use sound discretion in applying this authority to ensure that the suspension serves

the purpose of accelerating critical fuels reduction projects, while at the same time protecting public health and the environment. Each Agency shall maintain on its website a list of all suspensions approved under this Paragraph.

4. Critical fuels reduction projects eligible for suspension of statutes, rules, regulations, and requirements specified in Paragraph 2, shall include as a primary objective at least one of the following activities:
 - a. Removal of hazardous, dead, and/or dying trees;
 - b. Removal of vegetation for the creation of strategic fuel breaks as identified by approved fire prevention plans, including without limitation CAL FIRE Unit Fire Plans or Community Wildfire Preparedness Plans;
 - c. Removal of vegetation for community defensible space;
 - d. Removal of vegetation along roadways, highways, and freeways for the creation of safer ingress and egress routes for the public and responders and to reduce roadside ignitions;
 - e. Removal of vegetation using cultural traditional ecological knowledge for cultural burning and/or prescribed fire treatments for fuels reduction; or
 - f. Maintenance of previously-established fuel breaks or fuels modification projects.
5. Any activities performed under the suspension of statutes, rules, regulations, and requirements specified in Paragraph 2 shall be in accordance with the State Environmental Protection Plan, or a comparable plan describing how such actions will balance expeditious fuels reduction and environmental protection.
6. The Board of Forestry and Fire Protection shall take immediate steps to update the California Vegetation Treatment Program Environmental Impact Report (CalVTP EIR), in consultation with the California Natural Resources Agency and others as appropriate, to increase CalVTP's efficiency and utilization, in order to continue promoting rapid environmental review for large wildfire risk reduction treatments. In addition to accessing expertise from all appropriate state agencies, this process should also include public workshops with practitioners to solicit feedback on experiences during implementation in the first five years of the CalVTP and suggested improvements.
7. As necessary to assist local governments and for the protection of public health and the environment, state agencies shall enter into contracts to arrange for the procurement of materials, goods, and services, including housing for hand crews and required pre-work environmental surveys, to quickly assist with the response to this emergency and to achieve the purposes of this Proclamation. Applicable provisions of the Government Code and the Public Contract Code, including but not limited to travel, advertising, and competitive bidding requirements, are suspended to the extent

necessary to address the effects of this emergency and to carry out the purposes of this Proclamation.

8. The Secretary of the California Environmental Protection Agency and the Secretary of the California Natural Resources Agency shall confer with subject matter experts, including those within their respective Agencies, and provide to me, within 60 days, their consolidated recommendations for increasing the pace and scale of beneficial fire in California. These may include recommendations to ensure more consistency among local air pollution control districts and increasing allowable burn days.
9. The restrictions set forth in Penal Code section 396, which are automatically triggered upon proclamation of a state of emergency, are suspended, and no such restrictions are imposed, with respect to this State of Emergency.

I FURTHER DIRECT that as soon as hereafter possible, this Proclamation be filed in the Office of the Secretary of State and that widespread publicity and notice be given of this Proclamation.

This Proclamation is not intended to, and does not, create any rights or benefits, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity, against the State of California, its agencies, departments, entities, officers, employees, or any other person.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this 1st day of March 2025.



GAVIN NEWSOM
Governor of California

ATTEST:

SHIRLEY N. WEBER, PH. D
Secretary of State