

# EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT STATE OF CALIFORNIA

## EXECUTIVE ORDER N-05-19

**WHEREAS**, California experienced the most destructive wildfire season in State history in 2018, enduring over 7,600 wildfires that burned 1,846,445 acres in total;

**WHEREAS**, the 2018 Camp Fire was both the deadliest fire in State history, claiming the lives of 86 people, as well as the most destructive, destroying 18,804 structures – a tragedy from which impacted communities will take years to recover;

**WHEREAS**, six of the top ten most destructive fires in State history have occurred in just the past two years, including the Camp, Tubbs, Woolsey, Carr, Nuns, and Thomas Fires;

**WHEREAS**, the reality of climate change – persistent drought, warmer temperatures, and more severe winds – has created conditions that will lead to more frequent and destructive wildfires;

**WHEREAS**, historically, fires lit by Native Americans and lightning strikes cleared the forest of surface fuels on a regular cycle to manage vegetation;

**WHEREAS**, California arrived at our present emergency condition through the combined factors of fire exclusion, forest management policies that created overgrown and overcrowded forests, a rapidly changing climate, and a historic drought with accompanying bark beetle epidemics;

**WHEREAS**, fuels reduction, which encompasses a range of forest management activities, including thinning, treating surface fuels with prescribed fire, mechanical methods, manual methods, and grazing, can reduce potential fire intensity;

**WHEREAS**, the State has invested significant resources into proactive forestland health maintenance through a number of programs, including direct land management by the California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and California Conservation Corps crews, and through grants to landowners and other private entities that perform management projects on their own property or on sections of forestland in their communities;

**WHEREAS**, a significant infusion of funding from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund will make available \$1 billion over the next five years, beginning this year, for the purpose of active forestland management;

**WHEREAS**, in addition to the aforementioned \$1 billion in forestland management funding, the Governor's proposed 2019-2020 budget will also include significant enhancements for more year-round fire crews, as well as investments in greater use of technology and equipment for the purpose of preventing and fighting wildfires;

**WHEREAS**, to maximize the efficacy of these historic investments, the State endeavors to implement management strategies more rapidly and in a manner that is environmentally sustainable, and to prevent or contain to the greatest extent possible future destructive fires such as those that ravaged California in 2018;

**WHEREAS**, in order to prioritize the most at-risk communities, the State must consider two coequally important factors of vulnerability: scientific and social. California must access the best available science about dangerous fuel conditions, wind patterns, fire behavior, and other scientific indicators. But of equal importance are social vulnerability factors including social isolation, poverty, language barriers, and other access and functional needs challenges. Communities with high preponderance of physical fire danger and high indicators of social vulnerability deserve the State's highest attention; and

**WHEREAS**, the people of the State of California expect that their government will take all possible actions to protect life, property, and forests from deadly megafires, and will do so with an urgency that matches the scope of the threat.

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, GAVIN NEWSOM**, Governor of the State of California, by virtue of the power and authority vested in me by the Constitution and statutes of the State of California, do hereby issue this Order and direct as follows:

1. Within 45 days of the issuance of this Executive Order, CAL FIRE, in consultation with other State agencies and departments, shall provide a written report to the Governor with recommendations of the most impactful administrative, regulatory, and policy changes or waivers the Governor can initiate that are necessary to prevent and mitigate wildfires to the greatest extent possible, with an emphasis on environmental sustainability and protection of public health.
2. CAL FIRE shall be the lead department in the convening of state agencies and in the production of this report. Other agencies and departments shall cooperate and support CAL FIRE in the researching and writing of this report, including but not limited to the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, the California National Guard, the California Government Operations Agency, the Office of Planning and Research, and the Department of Finance.
3. CAL FIRE shall lead stakeholder engagement to inform the report, including consultations with local fire chiefs, local elected officials, Fire Safe Councils, and other impacted stakeholders, as necessary.
4. In preparing the report, CAL FIRE shall include recommendations to the Governor for immediate, medium-term, and long-term recommended actions that will have the greatest impact in preventing the impact of destructive, deadly wildfires. These recommendations should include, but not be limited to:
  - a. Methods to most quickly deploy personnel and resources onto the landscape for the purpose of performing fuels management.
  - b. Policy changes, including but not limited to procurement or permitting waivers that will allow for more rapid and effective

fuels management treatments, especially for projects accomplishable before the peak of fire season later this year.

- c. Methodology to assess which communities are at greatest risk from wildfire and the projects within/nearby areas that would reduce the threat of a catastrophic wildfire if completed. In this context, CAL FIRE shall consider not only the best available science when identifying high-hazard communities, but also socioeconomic factors and vulnerable populations that exacerbate the human toll of wildfires. This scoping shall be done in consultation with local impacted stakeholders, experts, and academics.
5. As CAL FIRE identifies communities at greatest risk from wildfire, per directive 4c herein, CAL FIRE shall share this assessment to guide the Governor's Office of Emergency Services as they scope and execute the "California for All" community resiliency public education and preparedness campaign proposed in the Governor's 2019-2020 budget. This effort will include local grants and will focus on community engagement and public education in high-risk areas with an emphasis on public health and safety.

**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that State Agencies shall cooperate in the implementation of this Order. Other entities of State government not under my direct executive authority, including the University of California and California State University, are requested to assist in its implementation.

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

**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that soon as hereafter possible, this Order shall be filed with the Office of the Secretary of State and that widespread publicity and notice shall be given to this Order.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF** I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this 8<sup>th</sup> day of January 2019.



GAVIN NEWSOM  
Governor of California

**ATTEST:**

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ALEX PADILLA  
Secretary of State