



**PROCLAMATION OF A LOCAL HEALTH EMERGENCY BY THE  
SONOMA COUNTY HEALTH OFFICER**

In the Matter of )  
Proclaiming the Existence of )  
"A Local Health Emergency" )

**WHEREAS**, California Government Code section 8630 and Section 10.5, Chapter 10 of the Sonoma County Code, empower the Director of Emergency Services to proclaim the existence of a local emergency when the County is affected or likely to be affected by a public calamity, subject to ratification by the Board of Supervisors at the earliest practicable time; and

**WHEREAS**, on August 18, 2020, the Director of Emergency Services for the County of Sonoma Issued a Proclamation of a Local Emergency for the County of Sonoma, State of California related to the Austin Creek "13-4" Fire (now named the Walbridge Fire) and the Fort Ross "11-16" Fire (now named the Meyers Fire) which have both been incorporated into the complex of fires known as the LNU Lightning Complex Fires (the "Director's Proclamation of Local Emergency"); and

**WHEREAS**, on August 18, 2020, the Governor of the State of California proclaimed a state of emergency exists statewide due to fires burning statewide; and

**WHEREAS**, on August 21, 2020, the Board of Supervisors ratified the Director's Proclamation of Local Emergency due to the conditions of extreme peril caused by these fires, which are exacerbated by extreme heat and fire danger weather, rolling power outages, and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic; and

**WHEREAS**, on August 22, 2020, the President issued a Major Disaster Declaration due to the fires; and

**WHEREAS**, the potential for widespread toxic exposures and threats to public health and the environment exists in the aftermath of a major wildfire disaster. Debris and ash from residential structure fires contain hazardous substances and the health effects of hazardous substance releases after a wildfire are well documented; and

**WHEREAS**, the combustion of building materials such as siding, roofing tiles, and insulation result in dangerous ash that may contain asbestos, heavy metals, and other hazardous materials. Household hazardous waste such as paint, gasoline, cleaning products, pesticides, compressed gas cylinders, and chemicals may have been stored in homes, garages, or outbuildings that may have burned in the fire, also producing hazardous materials; and

**WHEREAS**, exposure to hazardous substances may lead to acute and chronic health effects, and may cause long-term public health and environmental impacts. Uncontrolled hazardous materials and debris pose significant threats to public health through inhalation of dust particles and contamination of drinking water supplies. Improper handling can expose workers to toxic materials, and improper transport and disposal of fire debris can spread hazardous substances throughout the community; and

**WHEREAS**, the County is also under a Local Health Emergency due to COVID-19 which continues to create an imminent and substantial threat to public health and safety; and

**WHEREAS**, Health and Safety Code section 101040 confers upon the local Health Officer of political subdivisions of the state emergency powers necessary to protect public health and safety; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 101080, the Health Officer for the County of Sonoma is authorized to proclaim the existence of a local health emergency when this County or any area of the County is affected or likely to be affected such a public health threat while the Board of Supervisors is not in session, subject to ratification by the Board of Supervisors within seven days, and subject to reaffirmation every 30 days thereafter until such local health emergency is terminated; and

**WHEREAS**, the Health Officer for the County of Sonoma hereby finds that:

(a) The LNU Lightning Complex Fires have created certain hazardous waste conditions in the County in the form of contaminated debris from household hazardous waste/materials and structural debris resulting from the destruction of a large number of structures; and

(b) Post-fire conditions, if not addressed, have the potential to threaten water supplies; and

(c) The hazardous waste debris poses a substantial present or potential hazard to human health and the environment unless immediately addressed and managed; and

(d) There is an threat of infectious or communicable disease and/or non-communicable biologic agents due to accumulations of perishable foods and other organic materials that normally require refrigeration but have been left to spoil in areas that have lacked electricity and also due to potential contamination or destruction of residential and commercial water supply in the burned areas; and

(e) The combination of the COVID-19 pandemic and mass population displacement threatens human health; and

(f) The Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma is not in session and cannot immediately be called into session; and

(g) These threats to public health necessitate the proclamation of the existence of a local health emergency.

**NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS PROCLAIMED** that a local health emergency now exists in the burned areas of the County due to hazardous waste in the form of contaminated debris from hazardous waste/materials and structural debris from the ongoing LNU Lightning Complex Fires and due to contamination of residential food and water supply; and

**IT IS FURTHER PROCLAIMED AND ORDERED** that during the existence of the local emergency the powers, functions, and duties of the County Health Officer shall be those prescribed by State law, including the provisions of Sections 101040 and 101085 of the Health and Safety Code, and by ordinances, resolutions, and approved plans of the County of Sonoma in order to mitigate the effects of the local emergency.

**SIGNED AND SUBSCRIBED** this 24<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2020.



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Sundari R. Mase, MD, MPH  
Sonoma County Health Officer