



Legislation Text

File #: 2020-0889, **Version:** 1

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Auditor- Controller-Treasurer-Tax Collector and County Administrators Office

Staff Name and Phone Number: Amanda Ruch 707-565-3274, Niki Berrocal 707-565-2431

Vote Requirement: 4/5th

Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Title:

LNU Lightening Complex Fires Fund Establishment and Budget Resolution

Recommended Action:

- A) Approve a budget resolution establishing a fund for expenses and reimbursements related to the LNU Lightening Complex Fires declared a local emergency on 8/19/2020.
- B) Approve the use of \$1,000,000 of FY 2020-21 General Fund Contingencies to provide initial funding for the LNU Lightening Complex Fires Disaster Fund.

(4/5th Vote Required)

Executive Summary:

Two wildfires are burning in western Sonoma County requiring evacuations and outside support to fight the fires. The wildfires started as a result of the lightning storm on the morning of August 17, 2020. As of this writing, the Walbridge Fire, west of Healdsburg, has burned 54,000 acres and is 19% contained, and the Meyers Fire, north of Jenner, has burned 2,300 acres and is 97% contained. These fires are part of a larger complex of fires in Sonoma, Napa and Solano counties collectively called the LNU Lightning Complex Fires.

A local emergency has been declared and an emergency fund needs to be established to begin tracking the expenses related to this emergency event for reimbursement separately.

Sonoma County has been included as eligible for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Public Assistance for Category B Costs (75% federal reimbursement for emergency response costs). The County may be eligible for additional categories of FEMA public assistance. The county is also eligible for California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA) funding. As of this writing, emergency response operations are estimated at \$5.3M. In addition, EOC finance prepared an Initial Damage Estimates (IDE) as required by Cal-OES, which estimated approximately \$12.8 million in debris removal costs and damages to public infrastructure (roads, guardrails, culverts, retaining walls, etc.) for a total estimated cost for this event at approx. \$18.1M in Sonoma County. County Disaster Finance will apply for all eligible sources of reimbursement that become available for this event.

Discussion:

The need to house evacuees and support personnel from outside jurisdictions is driving the need for immediate appropriations related to the LNU Lightning Complex Fires. As of this writing, emergency response operations are estimated at \$5.3M. In addition, EOC finance prepared an Initial Damage Estimates (IDE) as

required by Cal-OES, which estimated approximately \$12.8 million in debris removal costs and damages to public agencies infrastructure (roads, guardrails, culverts, retaining walls, etc.) for a total estimated cost for this event at approx. \$18.1M in Sonoma County. The IDE represents estimates for Emergency Response (CAT B), Debris/Tree Removal (CAT A) and repair/replace costs for roads/infrastructure damages (CAT C). As a comparison, the Kincade fire claims to FEMA and CDAA totaled \$16.6 million with the county’s share at \$2.3 million and another \$2.3 million in non-reimbursable expenses including non-reimbursable labor costs and expenses associated with continuity of operations plan (COOP) activities. The LNU complex fire is similar in scope to the Kincaid fire; however, Kincaid is not eligible for CDAA whereas the LNU complex fire is eligible for FEMA as well as CDAA.

At this time, emergency response and damage costs have been estimated using the Kincade Fire for base assumptions. As of this writing, county operations are starting to enter the fire areas to perform their detail review and FEMA is scheduled to begin their Preliminary Damage Assessments on 8/27/2020. The county is in the preliminary stages of gathering information to being the process of identifying projects to submit to FEMA and Cal-OES for reimbursements. FEMA has granted eligibility to the county for Public Assistance however, no costs or projects have been reviewed or approved by FEMA at this time. The County cannot recognize potential revenues from FEMA or Cal-OES until the estimates are reviewed and approved by FEMA.

Staff requests that \$1,000,000 be transferred from General Fund Contingencies to a newly established fund (10151). Based upon the length of time to get the cost estimates approved from the Kincade fire, which is still pending, staff does not anticipate receiving reimbursement in FY 2020-21 which necessitates the use of contingencies for the initial expenses of response including hotel rooms for evacuees and response personnel.

The use of General Fund Contingencies is supporting this unforeseen event causing increased County costs during the fiscal year; due to the emergency, this request is being brought forward outside of the normal process to request contingencies.

Prior Board Actions:

Local Emergency Declaration, August 19, 2020

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 19-20 Adopted	FY20-21 Projected	FY 21-22 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested		1,000,000	
Total Expenditures		1,000,000	
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies		1,000,000	

Total Sources		1,000,000	
---------------	--	-----------	--

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

This item utilizes \$1,000,000 of General Fund Contingencies to provide initial funding for the LNU Lightening Complex Disaster Fund. The county is currently eligible for a 75% federal reimbursement of Category B Emergency Response costs related to the LNU Lightening Complex fire. At this time there is no federal reimbursement for debris removal or permanent project costs. The state has granted CDAA eligibility to Sonoma County for this event. The county may become eligible for additional funding depending on the scope of the incident. The county will apply for all available federal and state funding assistance.

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Attachment 1 - LNU Lightening Complex Fire Budget Resolution

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

N/A