



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 2022-0595, **Version:** 1

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**To:** Board of Supervisors, Sonoma County Water Agency Board of Directors

**Department or Agency Name(s):** Department of Emergency Management, Sonoma County Water Agency

**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Christopher Godley, 565-2052, Grant Davis, 547-1911,

**Vote Requirement:** Majority

**Supervisorial District(s):** Countywide

**Title:**

Drought Conditions Update and Local Emergency Proclamation Continuation; Drought Response and Flood Control Coordination Project

**Recommended Action:**

- A) Receive an update on Water Supply Conditions and continue Local Emergency Proclamation Due to Drought Conditions.
- B) Consider funding a Drought Response and Flood Control Coordination Project and provide direction to staff to implement the project for two-years at \$1,130,000 from the Water Security Fund.

**Executive Summary:**

On April 27, 2021, the Board of Supervisors proclaimed a local emergency due to drought conditions in the Sonoma County Operational Area. Critically low rainfall over the last two years has resulted in historically low water storage levels in the region's two water supply reservoirs and storage levels continue to decline.

The adverse environmental, economic, health, welfare and social impacts of the drought continue to pose an imminent and ever-increasing threat of disaster, and threaten to cause widespread potential harm to people, businesses, agriculture, property, communities, the environment, wildlife, and recreation in Sonoma County. Therefore, this item requests the Board of Supervisors approve a 60-day continuation of the April 27, 2021, proclamation of local emergency.

In addition, Sonoma County Department of Emergency Management (DEM) and Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) staff recommend a Drought Response and Flood Control Coordination Project to develop additional planning and response capabilities urgently needed to respond to current catastrophic drought conditions and State drought response requirements, while also planning for future flooding events and developing a more defined flood coordination framework. Staff is seeking approval and Board direction on this project.

During the June 2022 Budget Hearings, the Board set aside \$5 million from County discretionary one-time balances to create a Water Security Fund, which is the source being proposed to finance the Drought Response and Flood Control Coordination Project.

**Discussion:**

This Board item will provide an update on the current water supply conditions and drought response activities and recommend continuation of the Local Emergency Proclamation due to drought conditions. In addition, due to the continuing drought conditions, staff has developed a proposal that would allow for the establishment of a Drought Response and Flood Control Coordination Project.

The effects of climate change continue to impact Sonoma County and its residents with wildfires, extreme rainfall, severe drought, and significant extreme heat events already threatening lives, property, and the environment. For example, 2022 brings a third consecutive year of severe drought and forecasting models are indicating the drought will continue into 2023, at a minimum. At the other end of drought conditions is Sonoma County's continued prevalence for extreme flooding. A study conducted in 2019, (Corringham et al., 2019), shows that Sonoma County experienced the highest flood damages of any county over the 1978 to 2017 period among the 11 Western States.

The dynamic and unprecedented frequency and scope of these weather disasters have often exceeded the capabilities of county residents, communities, public safety agencies, and governments. While current plans and capabilities have increased to meet some of these challenges, the frequency, complexity, and overlapping nature of these events threaten to exceed even the increased capacity and capabilities of the County.

Due to current extreme drought conditions affecting the State, Senate Bill 552 (SB552) was passed into law in January 2022. SB552 is intended to protect vulnerable communities from extended periods of water shortage by making changes to local drought and water shortage contingency plans and by enhancing and requiring increased coordination between local and state governments, small water suppliers, and rural communities. These efforts, implemented locally, will go towards building a drought preparedness framework.

In response to these increasingly complex risks, as well as the additional SB552 requirements, a Drought Response and Flood Control Coordination Project is being proposed, which would add capacity to both DEM and Sonoma Water, to support the response planning needs and multi-agency coordination required.

#### Drought Response and Flood Control Coordination Project Proposal

As described in the attached Drought Conditions Update (see Attachment 1), the current drought conditions are projected to worsen while models are suggesting that the drought may continue into another year, at least, with another dry winter probable. The impacts of drought are being felt across all sectors within our community, and as of now, with the increased risk, complexity, and frequency of other disasters facing Sonoma County, staff have been strained to keep up with the needed efforts to proactively develop an effective drought response and/or flood control strategy.

Recognizing that the two extremes of drought and extreme flooding have overlapping complexities and interwoven components, staff are recommending the establishment of the Drought Response and Flood Control Coordination Project to maximize interagency coordination and program design and leverage limited

resources and capacity to address both extreme weather-related events.

Establishment of this project would support two years of funding for two limited-term positions, one each in DEM and Sonoma Water, and other associated services, supplies, and operational costs. These positions will work under the direction of the DEM Director and Sonoma Water General Manager, collaboratively, to develop capabilities to support current sustained drought operations through 2023. Specifically:

1. Expand and maintain a standing drought task force to comply with SB552 requirements and ensure adequate representation from all sectors within the operational area;
2. Provide staff support to task force working groups to ensure programmatic advancement for drought monitoring, public information and warning, emergency response planning;
3. Provide technical support to community water systems and domestic well owners throughout the operational area in support of SB552 requirements for those entities to develop water shortage contingency plans in coordination with the County;
4. Develop a County Drought Response and Water Shortage Response Plan;
5. Engage and coordinate with adjacent operational areas and regional agencies;
6. Ensure equity considerations into all planning, operations, and communications;
7. Develop a sustainable organizational model and program that will indefinitely serve as the County Drought Task Force and develop a transition plan to ensure existing staff can absorb the maintenance of all drought response and planning activities upon expiration of limited-term positions;
8. Ensure continuity and coordination between the various existing, already funded, drought resiliency projects.

In addition, unlike many other counties, flood management and coordination responsibilities and services in Sonoma County are spread across several local government entities (county, cities, and Sonoma Water) in addition to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. There is little coordination or comprehensive planning for countywide flood-risk management and response coordination among these organizations. This current fragmented organizational structure has led to a lack of coordination and confusion regarding roles and responsibilities (planning/analysis, operations and maintenance, and emergency response) for flood risk management and response coordination.

This project, with requested staff support, will complement and expand a countywide assessment of flood risk management which is already underway. As part of this Drought Response and Flood Control Coordination Project, an action plan for implementing the recommendations from the assessment will be completed and staff will facilitate and develop capabilities to improve flood risk management and response coordination within the operational area and with aligned stakeholder agencies. Specifically, DEM and Sonoma Water will:

1. Develop an action plan for implementing recommendations identified in current flood risk management assessment;

2. Integrate local agencies that maintain levees and flood control structures into the overall emergency response organization;
3. Develop a comprehensive flood response and recovery plan for the operational area, including:
  - a. Clarifying roles and responsibilities,
  - b. Establishing framework for response coordination, information sharing, and community engagement,
  - c. Ensuring equity considerations are factored into all planning, response, and recovery elements,
  - d. Developing recovery strategies to guide post-flooding activities.

Staffing and Budgetary Proposal

Two positions are being requested (one DEM, one Sonoma Water) for a limited term (two-years) to provide the capacity within DEM and Sonoma Water to implement this project, build the programmatic framework for sustained drought response and flood control coordination efforts, and plan for a transition of all program/project elements to existing staff for maintenance at the end of the two years.

Existing staffing and funds within DEM and Sonoma Water could be used in support of some of these efforts but would come at the cost of existing agency tasks and strategic plan priorities (ex. DEM would have to suspend development of an Earthquake Annex, Sonoma Water would have to suspend homeland security hardening of critical infrastructure). Wildfire or other disasters during this period would divert existing staff from task force functions. Creating the Full Time Equivalent time limited position will ensure that Sonoma Water and DEM have staffing to coordinate and collaborate with stakeholders over the next 24 months and fully execute the implementation of the Drought Response and Flood Control Project.

Program manager level positions are being requested in order to provide the overall management, guidance, and support necessary to effectively facilitate and support the multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional effort, and ensure effective engagement, administration, and implementation of project efforts with limited oversight from existing staff.

Item	Year 1 Costs	Year 2 Costs	Notes
Project Manager(s)	-	-	Existing DEM & SW staff
Program Lead - SW	\$210,000	\$210,000	Program Manager classification
Program Lead - DEM	\$210,000	\$210,000	Program Manager classification
Other Dept. Support	\$75,000	\$75,000	(i.e., County Counsel, PIO, Webmaster)
Operations & Supplies	\$70,000	\$70,000	

Yearly Total	\$565,000	\$565,000	
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Water Security Fund

DEM and Sonoma Water staff are requesting up to \$1,130,000 from the newly created Water Security Fund to develop planning and response capabilities and products urgently needed to respond to catastrophic drought and flood events. The project will address new state requirements as well as serve as a platform for pursuing future state and federal funds. Sonoma Water and DEM staff will return to the Board with additional details, to approve the positions, and appropriate funding.

For the remaining Water Security funds, Staff is currently refining multiple projects and concepts which will be brought back to the Board for consideration at a future meeting.

Continuance of Local Emergency Proclamation

As a result of the above conditions and as required by Government Code section 8630, the Board must review the proclamation of local emergency every 60 days and determine if there is a need for continuing the local emergency. Due to the ongoing adverse impacts of the drought, staff recommend that the Board of Supervisors approve continuation of the April 27, 2021, Proclamation of a Local Emergency Due to Drought Conditions in the Sonoma County Operational Area for an additional 60 days.

**Strategic Plan:**

This item directly supports the County’s Five-year Strategic Plan and is aligned with the following pillar, goal, and objective.

**Pillar:** Resilient Infrastructure

**Goal 2:** Invest in capital systems to ensure continuity of operations and disaster response.

**Objective 1:** Strengthen critical communications infrastructure, interoperability, and information technology tools relied upon during disasters.

**Pillar:** Racial Equity and Social Justice

**Goal 3:** Ensure racial equity throughout all County policy decisions and service delivery.

**Objective 2:** Collaborate with community members and stakeholder groups to develop racial equity strategies for County emergency response, economic recovery and resiliency planning efforts.

**Prior Board Actions:**

- 05-03-2022: Received Drought Conditions Update and Local Emergency Proclamation Declaration Continued
- 03-01-2022: Received Drought Conditions Update and Local Emergency Proclamation Declaration Continued
- 01-04-2022: Received Drought Conditions Update and Local Emergency Proclamation Declaration Continued
- 11-02-2021: Received Drought Conditions Update and Local Emergency Proclamation Declaration Continued. Board authorized the Director of the Transportation and Public Works Department to execute the Agreement for Emergency Water Service with California-American Water Company until October 1, 2022

- 09-14-2021: Received Drought Conditions Update and Local Emergency Proclamation Declaration Continued
- 07-20-2021: Received Drought Conditions Update and Local Emergency Proclamation Declaration Continued
- 06-18-2021: Board of Directors approved emergency drought response actions including adopting a resolution making findings of a need to perform emergency work without bidding to protect health, property and essential public services; and delegating authority to the General Manager of Sonoma Water to take actions necessary pursuant to the restructured agreement for water supply.
- 06-08-2021: Board received drought conditions update and continued the April 27, 2021 local emergency proclamation due to drought conditions.
- 05-18-2021: Board adopted a concurrent budget resolution providing \$400,000 of contingency funding to support Santa Rosa Plain Drought Resiliency Project.
- 05-11-2021: Board received an update on current status of drought conditions and adopted a concurrent resolution urging a 20% voluntary reduction in water use and other specific actions.
- 04-27-2021: Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution Proclaiming a Local Emergency to Drought Conditions in the Sonoma County Operational Area and Requesting the Governor to Seek a Presidential Declaration.

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

Expenditures	FY 22-23 Adopted	FY23-24 Projected	FY 24-25 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested	\$565,000	\$565,000	
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$565,000</b>	<b>\$565,000</b>	
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF	\$565,000	\$565,000	
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>	<b>\$565,000</b>	<b>\$565,000</b>	

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

Pending Board direction, funding is requested for up to \$1.13 million over two years (\$565k each year) to support the requested staff and operational needs for the Drought Response and Flood Control Coordination Project. DEM and Sonoma Water will return to the Board with a consent item for the 2.0 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) time limited position allocations (1 FTE each for DEM and Sonoma Water) and to make budget adjustments per Board direction received on this July 12, 2022, board item. This project will be funded from the \$5 million Water Security Fund established and approved by the Board at the Budget Hearings on June 17, 2022.

**Staffing Impacts:**

Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)
Department Program Manager - Project	\$7,111.86 - \$8,644.16	2	

**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

DEM and Sonoma Water staff will work with human resources to verify job classification and will return with a consent item to update the positions allocations listing for both DEM and Sonoma Water.

**Attachments:**

Attachment 1: Drought Conditions Update

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

None