

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

In 2020, the state experienced unprecedented emergencies, having to respond to the global COVID-19 Pandemic and wildfires that were the most destructive in state history. While continuing to respond to the pandemic, the state continues to prepare for a worsening drought and potentially another catastrophic wildfire season.

The May Revision bolsters the state's ability to prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate against the impacts of multiple emergency events the state continues to experience in the midst of severe climate change, while prioritizing equity in protecting vulnerable and disadvantaged communities and populations.

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Under the authorities of the California Emergency Services Act, the Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) serves as the state's leadership hub during all major emergencies and disasters. This includes responding, directing, and coordinating state and federal resources and mutual aid assets across all regions to support the diverse communities across the state.

Cal OES also supports local jurisdictions and communities through planning and preparedness activities, training, and facilitating the immediate response to an emergency through the longer-term recovery phase. During this process, Cal OES serves as the State Administrative Agency and the overall coordinator and agent to secure

federal government resources and eligible reimbursements through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

STRENGTHENING CALIFORNIA'S EMERGENCY CAPACITY AND CAPABILITIES

The May Revision proposes \$98.4 million (\$76.2 million General Fund) and 224 positions for Cal OES to address the more frequent, complicated, and often simultaneous emergencies and disasters involving numerous counties and regions across the state.

The May Revision proposes a package of initiatives to strengthen the state's resiliency and ability to respond to increasingly complex disasters, and emergencies; lead multi-faceted, long-term recovery efforts across California; and strengthen equity and connections with vulnerable and disadvantaged communities. The May Revision proposes funding for Cal OES in the following areas:

- **Reducing Reliance on Redirected and Temporary Staff for Emergency Response and Recovery**—\$16.5 million General Fund and 73 positions ongoing to establish a permanent and dedicated Incident Support Team, a deployable Incident Management Assistance Team, and needed support to operate California's State Operations Center or Regional Emergency Operations Centers to respond to the all-hazard events. These teams will strengthen the capabilities of the State Operations Center and lessen the Department's reliance on redirected staff from other areas in the organization.
- **Long-Term Recovery Support**—\$37.8 million (\$15.7 million General Fund) ongoing to provide permanent funding for 104 permanent recovery positions provided in 2018 with three year limited-term funding, and 110 new positions to better support California's recovery efforts and recoupment of eligible federal disaster cost reimbursements for state and local governments, and to maximize the hazard mitigation program to mitigate the impacts of future disasters on the state and local jurisdictions.
- **Strengthening Equity and Connections with Communities**—\$29.9 million General Fund ongoing and 13 positions to establish a new Office of Equity and make permanent a Listos grant program to further strengthen connections and build resiliency with all communities. California's disasters have had a significant impact on communities across the diverse state, but some communities have been hit harder than others. A strong connection between California's diverse communities and the emergency response network is key to better planning and preparation for disasters and swiftly meeting community needs during and after the emergency

event. The Listos program would include an on-going \$25 million General Fund grant program and expand its focus from emergency preparedness to also include emergency response and recovery.

- **Modernizing Technology and Data Analytics**—\$10.2 million General Fund and 14 positions to modernize the Department's technology and data capabilities through new technology and updating outdated systems. Reliable data analytics have proven more important than ever to make data-informed decisions impacting the state emergency response and overall recovery strategy.
- **Strengthening Tracking and Reporting of Disaster Costs and Funding**—\$4 million General Fund and 14 positions to establish a new unit within Cal OES to better coordinate and lead the state's disaster cost tracking and public facing reporting efforts in coordination with all state agencies. In addition, this new unit would serve as a liaison with the Department of Finance to better align cost tracking and federal cost recovery efforts, as this work is currently being done across agencies.

The May Revision includes an additional \$133.9 million General Fund for Cal OES for the following investments to enhance state and local emergency preparedness and response:

- **California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA)**—\$100 million one-time General Fund to increase the amount of funding available through the CDAA, which is used to repair, restore, or replace public real property damaged or destroyed by a disaster or to reimburse local governments for eligible costs associated with emergency activities undertaken in response to a state of emergency proclaimed by the Governor. This augmentation increases total CDAA funding available in 2021-22 to \$162.6 million.
- **Southern Regional Emergency Operations Center**—\$26.5 million one-time General Fund to acquire land to establish a new emergency operation center in the Cal OES southern operational region. It also includes \$7.7 million to relocate the staff from temporary trailers to a leased space while the construction of the new building occurs. The current space is inadequate and limits the capability of the team in responding to emergencies. The Department needs a permanent location for this staff given the high risk for disasters in the area and the critical need for timely response to local communities.
- **Wildfire Forecast and Threat Intelligence Integration Center**—\$7.4 million and 22 positions for Cal OES, California Military Department, Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), and Public Utilities Commission to implement Chapter 405,

Statutes of 2019 (SB 209). This bill requires Cal OES and CAL FIRE to establish a Wildfire Forecast and Threat Intelligence Integration Center to: (1) provide “real time” intelligence and data regarding wildfire threats to government agencies; (2) develop intelligence products for public and private entities involved in wildfire risk mitigation efforts; and (3) serve as a central organizing hub for wildfire forecasting, weather information, threat intelligence gathering, and analysis. This additional investment builds on the \$2 million ongoing General Fund provided in the 2020 Budget Act for a total investment of \$9.6 million.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS INFRASTRUCTURE

The collateral and cascading impacts of California's disaster events are reflected in the increasingly widespread damages, injuries, loss of lives, and economic disruptions that the state has experienced in recent years. Disadvantaged communities have been disproportionately impacted and experience longer recoveries.

SIGNIFICANT ADJUSTMENTS:

- **Community Hardening to Build Disaster Resilient Communities**—\$250 million one-time General Fund to develop and implement a new initiative, “Prepare California,” modeled after a successful FEMA program, designed to build disaster-resistant communities through state, local, federal, and private sector and nongovernmental organization partnerships. This proposal would be implemented in a manner that promotes the principles of equity in building statewide resiliency and education to all hazards, including earthquakes, through community hardening programs. This program maximizes the effectiveness of governmental, non-profit, and local community partnerships and seeks to eliminate current barriers for local and tribal governments, including paying up to 100 percent of the local government's cost share for participating in the federal hazard mitigation program.
- **Community Resilience Centers**—\$150 million one-time General Fund for the Department of Food and Agriculture to support the development and enhancement of community resilience centers. Funding would be available to improve both local fairground and other community facilities to enhance the state's emergency preparedness capabilities, particularly in response to climate change. Funding could be used to support infrastructure for emergency evacuation, shelter, base camps during emergency events, and critical deferred maintenance. Elements for this infrastructure may include cooling and heating centers, clean air centers, and extended emergency evacuation response centers with community

kitchens, shower facilities, broadband, back-up power and other community needs due to wildfires, floods, and other emergencies or climate events.

DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION

The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) provides resource management and wildland fire protection services covering over 31 million acres. It operates 234 fire stations and also staffs local fire departments when funded by local governments. CAL FIRE contracts with county agencies in six counties to provide wildland fire protection services.

The ongoing impacts of climate change on California's wildlands continue to create critically dry fuel conditions and longer, more severe fire seasons. As of April 2021, the United States Drought Monitor shows that 70 percent of California is experiencing severe, extreme, and exceptional drought conditions, and these conditions are expected to remain in the coming months. In addition to widespread drought, the below-normal snowpack is expected to melt off earlier than usual, leaving middle and upper elevations available for fire spread earlier in the season than usual. With these conditions in mind, the May Revision proposes further investments to enhance CAL FIRE's fire prevention and suppression capacity.

SIGNIFICANT ADJUSTMENT:

- **Firefighter Surge Capacity**—\$38.9 million one-time General Fund to augment CAL FIRE's resources for the 2021 fire season. To address the state's high-risk fuel conditions, this additional funding will support the staffing of three additional California National Guard crews for a total of 13 fire crews from July through December, and continue staffing 8 additional CAL FIRE crews that began in April 2021.

The May Revision also maintains funding for the comprehensive Wildfire and Forest Resilience proposal in the Governor's Budget. This funding will increase the pace and scale of fire prevention and forest health activities and decrease the risk of catastrophic wildfires. For additional information, see the Climate Change Chapter.

CALIFORNIA MILITARY DEPARTMENT

The May Revision proposes \$2.8 million ongoing General Fund to address the increased magnitude, frequency, and complexity of natural disasters. In recent years, the California Military Department has changed from providing a periodic response force to sustaining year-round support for disaster prevention, response, and recovery. These resources will enhance current logistical, administrative, and fiscal support operations, as well as future planning and training to prepare for contingencies as the nature of disasters and emergencies evolve.