

# County of Santa Clara

Office of the County Executive

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**DATE:** April 28, 2023

**TO:** Honorable Board of Supervisors  
Jeffrey V. Smith, County Executive

**FROM:** Dana Reed, Director Office of Emergency Management

**SUBJECT: Off-Agenda Report Related to Emergency Preparedness and Crisis Response**

On February 7, 2023 (Item No. 18), the Board of Supervisors received a report from the Roads and Airport Department with recommendations relating to storm damage to County roads during winter 2022-2023. During the discussion, Supervisor Simitian requested Administration to report to the Board during the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget process with recommendations for investments in and strategies for emergency preparedness and crisis response. Additionally, Supervisor Chavez requested information on communication plans for the public and the Board; and, circumstances when decisions require escalation. As part of the discussion, Supervisor Chavez also requested that Administration provide a report relating to the creation of a single phone number that individuals can contact to get centralized information during a crisis.

As a result of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) received Board support and approval for additional emergency response staffing resources to bolster its efforts with preparedness, response, and recovery. The ability to pivot these resources in response to the most recent series of unprecedented storms was essential to successfully operating the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and responding to the events that started on December 25, 2022. More specifically, having the resources and ability to build a Logistics Team to serve in the EOC, as well as be able to maintain two emergency supply warehouses were critical to the successful response. The County Executive's FY 2023-2024 Recommended Budget contains a recommendation for a position to serve as the all-hazard Recovery Officer. If approved by the Board, starting next fiscal year, this position will initiate and monitor the recovery process

for both public assistance and individual assistance damage assessment, oversee community support, coordination with local, state, and federal agencies, track funding, develop recovery projects, and serve as the County's primary point of contact for the duration of an incident. For example, OEM is still monitoring and responding to community and agency inquiries from the 2020 SCU Complex Fire and the Recovery Officer would be responsible for coordinating this effort.

OEM actively maintains situational awareness for the County for all incidents and issues a daily situational report, Monday through Friday, to all Operational Area partners. When OEM determines that a potential event, such as severe weather, may impact the county, OEM monitors and provides situational status information to the County Executive and maintains close contact with the National Weather Service. If there is a need to escalate actions, such as activating the EOC or holding daily Operational Area calls, OEM initiates those actions with approval from the County Executive. As an incident progresses, and if it becomes apparent that the county will be significantly impacted, OEM will recommend that a Local Emergency Proclamation be issued by the Emergency Services Director and ratified by the Board. This is an essential and necessary step to requesting resources and funding from the state and federal governments, if a Federal Declaration is requested by the governor and approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The recent series of storms demonstrated the complexity of tracking and discerning multiple proclamations and declarations, each one unique to each incident. The most recent March 2023 storms resulted in \$12,200,000 of damage to public infrastructure, and the County is awaiting inclusion in FEMA DR4699 for categories A-G. As stated previously, OEM tracks all elements of recovery and reports to the County Executive when issues arise that require escalation.

The County utilizes several avenues for communication during emergencies, referred to collectively as the Joint Information System (JIS). The JIS is comprised of 2-1-1, social media, apps such as Nextdoor, press releases, community meetings, information to Board offices for constituent inquiries, the creation of specific event webpages, email, and utilizing all Operational Area Public Information Officers to help get messaging out and to amplify existing messaging. During the 2016 Loma Fire, 2017 Floods, 2020 SCU Complex Fire and the most recent storms OEM utilized a hotline for impacted residents to call for assistance. CADRE is currently organizing a call center in an effort to direct residents impacted by the recent storms to resources and non-profit organizations who may be able to help address their needs.

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