



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

March 22, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
The President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D. C. 20500

Through: Robert J. Fenton, Jr.
Regional Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency Region IX
1111 Broadway, Suite 1200
Oakland, California 94607-4052

Dear Mr. President:

I would first like to thank you for issuing an Emergency Declaration on March 13, 2020, and for the assistance of the federal government in response to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), including the appropriations for assistance to states and local governments and the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Furthermore, I appreciate that you and many of the members of your Coronavirus Task Force have been personally available to me and my team, and that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has been assisting California in its fight against the spread and impacts of COVID-19 in this state.

Pursuant to Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. Sections 5121-5207 (Stafford Act), and Title 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations (44 CFR) section 206.36, I respectfully request that you declare a major disaster in the State of California as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on what we know already, COVID-19 is an unprecedented global crisis and its impact in California is already severe and likely to worsen. Therefore, due to the catastrophic nature of COVID-19, I request that you expedite this declaration without the need to complete preliminary damage assessments pursuant to 44 CFR section 206.33(d). On March 4, 2020, I proclaimed,

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under the California Emergency Services Act, a state of emergency in California, and I have issued more than 10 Executive Orders, in just the past week, to further facilitate and enhance California's ability to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

My Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) activated our State Operations Center on March 2, 2020, which advanced to its highest level (Level 1) on March 6, 2020, in support of the California Department of Public Health's (CDPH) Medical and Health Coordination Center (MHCC). As well, Cal OES' Coastal Region, Inland Region, and Southern Region Emergency Operations Centers, and California's counties, municipalities, tribes, and special districts activated their Emergency Operations Centers.

Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic requires truly extraordinary effort, which California has undoubtedly undertaken. I activated the State Emergency Plan and deployed all available assets, including local and state mutual aid. The State of California, local governments, community-based organizations, and volunteers have taken extraordinary steps to respond to this rapidly intensifying situation. Nearly all of California's state agencies are involved in mitigating the impacts of COVID-19, both in the field and in the State Operations Center, including but not limited to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA), California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), California Department of Education (CDE), California Department of Social Services (CDSS), California Department of Developmental Services (CDDS), California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), California Highway Patrol (CHP), California Department of General Services (DGS), California Transportation Commission (CTC), California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), California Air National Guard (CANG), California's Office of Surgeon General, and California Volunteers (CalVolunteers). In addition, approximately 15 volunteer centers, as well as AmeriCorps and Local Conservation Corps are engaged to help address the impacts to California as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The MHCC is working tirelessly to disseminate critical information. To date, it has fielded more than 3,480 inquiries from local health jurisdictions and healthcare facilities and issued countless press releases to ensure the public is well-informed.

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As of March 21, 2020, 22 California public health laboratories (PHL) are providing diagnostic testing for COVID-19 using the CDC-developed Emergency Use Authorization polymerase chain reaction assay; CDPH is working with the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) to secure resources from the Strategic National Stockpile; CANG is bolstering medical capabilities at COVID-19 quarantine sites; EMSA continues to utilize contracts with Medic Ambulance and AMR as needed to support the transport of individuals who test positive for COVID-19 and need transportation from quarantine sites at military bases, in addition to acquiring 810 ventilators to support the COVID-19 response; CHP provided transportation and security escort to quarantined passengers from the Grand Princess cruise ship to Travis Air Force Base, a hotel in San Carlos (which the State promptly acquired as a quarantine site), and the Oakland Airport; and OSG is working on publications regarding the unintended consequences and stress of social distancing, how to talk to children about coronavirus, and best practices for children and families during a crisis, as well as coordinating opportunities with Sesame Street, PBS Kids, and Nickelodeon's learning platform to incorporate content that talks about coronavirus, stress, and how to stay healthy during this time.

Unfortunately, California has been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Besides California being home to nearly 40 million people, which itself poses significant logistical issues few other states face, California partnered with the federal government in several extremely complex and challenging repatriation missions, which strained California's resources and impacted California's healthcare delivery system.

Day by day, COVID-19 is rapidly spreading in California. To date, approximately 25,200 tests have been conducted. This includes the latest numbers California has received from commercial and private labs. At least 12,528 results have been received and another 12,700+ are pending. As of today, we have 1,224 positive cases and sadly 23 of California's residents have lost the fight against COVID-19. Using federal guidance and direction, my Public Health Director and I have implemented aggressive social distancing measures, including a "Stay-at-Home" order, prohibiting – except for public health enumerated exceptions – all public and private gatherings of any number of people occurring outside a household

or living unit. In an effort to mitigate the outbreak, K-12 schools throughout the State closed, as did colleges and universities. Hospitals and health care facilities are overwhelmed, even with having rescheduled elective surgeries. All large gatherings have been cancelled, including sporting events, concerts and other entertainment events, including the closure of theme parks such as Disneyland. We take all these steps in hope of "flattening the curve" in California, though we sadly expect our case count to continue to rise for several weeks.

California continues to adapt to this ongoing pandemic through policy implementation, and providing assistance to the health care sector, first responders, and general public. As the crisis advances, we continue to evaluate and assess the existing impacts and anticipate impacts to come. Despite this, and despite the Herculean efforts to rapidly expand the capacity of California's healthcare delivery system, there will without a doubt be extraordinary additional needs. It is clear additional resources are immediately necessary to adequately respond to the unmet needs of the people and businesses of California.

This crisis is having wide-ranging impacts on families, communities, and in every sector of California public and private life. The curtailment of consumer spending resulting from public health directives to isolate at home has placed a disproportionate burden on small businesses. As a result of the negative economic impacts of the necessary mitigation measures being placed to protect the health and safety of our people, businesses and their employees need assistance.

California's residents are under stay-at-home orders, causing stress and uncertainty. Businesses are closed, except as needed to maintain continuity of operations of critical infrastructure sectors. Many individuals are financially insecure and are facing additional crises due to lost wages. Many children do not have sufficient resources for home learning and are suffering the impact of social isolation. Stress levels for adults and children are high; we expect acuity of mental health conditions to rise, and substance use to increase. At the same time, California's healthcare system is severely taxed, and the safety net system of behavioral health providers is struggling to manage financially during this period of low volume – fewer clients are seeking care (though demand will likely increase as time goes on). We respectfully seek funding to respond to this emergency.

As an example, Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) benefits will provide much needed financial assistance to all Californians who do not qualify for regular state-funded Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits. This group of Californians includes business owners, the self-employed, and workers who have not earned enough wages to qualify for regular UI benefits. The DUA benefits will also help individuals who have collected all their regular UI benefits and who could file a DUA claim to continue receiving the assistance needed to provide for basic necessities, such as food and housing.

Hundreds of thousands of Californians are being directly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in ways we have never seen. Tens of thousands are losing their jobs, many who were already living either below or just above the poverty line. Roughly 150,000+ Californians are experiencing homelessness, and California is actively working to secure shelter and help slow the spread of COVID-19 within this vulnerable population. This population will also require much needed case management to assist in the transition and working through this very tough and uncertain time. The Disaster Case Management Program (DCMP) will provide much needed relief in assisting with unmet needs and resources that only a well-trained and experienced case manager can provide. Counties and local nonprofits are already working well beyond their capacity to provide case management to these individuals. We are at a point that if California does not receive DCMP from our Federal partners many of these individuals will not be able to recover.

A breakdown of Individual Assistance Program demographics is presented below:

	Population	Average of Persons Below Poverty Level**	Median Household Income	Percent Elderly (Over 65 yrs)*	Percent Disabled (Under 65 yrs)*	Percent Pre-Disaster Unemployment**
National	308,745,538	12.3%	\$55,322	16%	8.6%	4.0%
California***	37,253,956	13.3%	\$63,783	14.3%	6.8%	4.3%

* US Census Population Estimates July 1, 2018

** California Employment Development Department/Monthly Labor Force Data January 2020

***A statewide county breakdown is available upon request.

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In less than three short years, California has experienced a sequence of deadly and devastating disasters – in fact, the largest, deadliest, and most destructive wildfires in California history occurred since 2017. The financial impact of nine Major Disaster Declarations since January 2017 has put a tremendous strain on the resources and people of California. When coupled with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, recovery will be ongoing and difficult for survivors and communities throughout California.

In July 2019, a series of very powerful earthquakes struck California, resulting in an Emergency Declaration (FEMA-3415-EM). In February and March 2019, California received two Major Disaster Declarations as a result of extreme storms, flooding, landslides, and mudslides (FEMA-4431-DR and FEMA-4434-DR). Further, during 2019's wildfire season, 11 separate Fire Management Assistance Declarations were warranted to the state of California. According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, in Fiscal Year 2018-2019 alone, \$635 million was estimated in fire suppression expenditures.

In the summer of 2018, California received a Major Disaster Declaration for the Carr Fire and Mendocino Complex Fire (FEMA-4382-DR), which remains the largest fire in the history of California.

In December 2017, the Thomas Fire ignited in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. It was the then-largest wildfire in California's history and resulted in a Fire Management Assistance Declaration (FEMA-5524-FM). Shortly thereafter, a deadly mudslide engulfed the town of Montecito in Santa Barbara County. The fires and mudslides caused unprecedented damage and destruction and consequently, a Major Disaster Declaration was declared in California (FEMA-4353-DR). The Thomas Fire and subsequent mudslides were preceded just months before by another sequence of historically unprecedented wildfires, which also resulted in a Major Disaster Declaration (FEMA-4344-DR). Further, between January and February of 2017, California experienced multiple atmospheric river systems, which brought with them extreme storms. These storms and subsequent widespread destruction warranted three separate Major Disaster Declarations (FEMA-4301-DR, FEMA-4305-DR, FEMA-4308-DR).

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Now, while also actively recovering from the floods, wildfires, and earthquakes of the last few years, COVID-19 is hitting California with an estimated attack rate of 56 percent, which further impacts California's capacity to deliver high quality services that protect and serve millions of Californians. The financial burden associated with California's response and recovery efforts resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic will be extremely difficult given the already-grueling and unprecedented series of disasters within a short time period California has endured.

Preliminary damage assessments are impossible to perform at this time due to the dynamic nature of this pandemic, but cases continue to increase each day, and ongoing life-saving response activities are overwhelming both State and local resources. Further, conducting assessments at this time would jeopardize the health and safety of our collective staffs. I have determined that this incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the State and affected local governments, and that supplementary Federal assistance is necessary. I am specifically requesting Public Assistance Categories A through G, and all Individual Assistance Programs for California's 58 counties including, Individuals and Households Program, mass care and emergency assistance, crisis counseling, disaster case management, disaster unemployment assistance, disaster legal services, and the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Transitional Sheltering Assistance, Hazard Mitigation statewide, and any other Stafford Act disaster assistance programs that may be appropriate.

I certify for this major disaster the state and local governments will assume all applicable non-federal shared costs as required by the Stafford Act. I have designated the Director of the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, Mark Ghilarducci, as the State Coordinating Officer for this request. I further request joint preliminary damage assessments be waived, in accordance with 44 CFR section 206.33(d), since this incident is of unusual severity and magnitude and does not require field damage assessments to determine the need for supplemental Federal assistance under the Act.

Thank you for recognizing that without the additional resources requested,

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impacts will be felt throughout the nation, as well as around the world and thank you for your concern and leadership during this difficult time in our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gavin Newsom", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gavin Newsom
Governor

Enclosures
Stafford Act and State Disaster Declarations in Previous 18 Months
California Federally Recognized Tribes
OMB No. 1660-0009/FEMA Form 010-0-13