

**EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT  
STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

**EXECUTIVE ORDER N-6-23**

**WHEREAS** on March 1, 2023, March 8, 2023, March 12, 2023, March 14, 2023, and March 28, 2023, I proclaimed a State of Emergency to exist in 47 counties, cumulatively, as a result of a series of ongoing winter storms that initially struck California beginning in late February and continue to significantly impact the counties identified in my Proclamations; and

**WHEREAS** the State has experienced over a dozen atmospheric rivers since December 2022, resulting in compounding and cumulative impacts across California, including what are expected to be record amounts of snow in the Sierra Nevada, in particular in the southern Sierra, and current and forecasted precipitation are expected to add to historic snowpack levels already composed of several million acre-feet of snow water content; and

**WHEREAS** reservoirs into which the Sierra snowpack runoff would flow are already impacted by runoff, which is expected to greatly exceed available storage capacity in the reservoirs in and around the Tulare Lake Basin and the San Joaquin River Basin, and much of the ground in the area has reached saturation due to the series of ongoing winter storms; and

**WHEREAS** the Tulare Lake Basin is the terminal point for the Kings, Kaweah, Tule, and Kern Rivers, and several smaller streams, meaning that water from additional expected rains and Sierra snowpack runoff that cannot be stored in reservoirs or absorbed into the ground will flow into the basin; and

**WHEREAS** recent storms have already caused flooding in the Tulare Lake Basin, leading to emergency rescues and evacuation orders in Allensworth, Alpaugh, and other communities in Tulare and Kings Counties, and leading to dozens of levee breaks and local agencies directing strategic cuts to canals and levees to prevent further flooding of communities; and

**WHEREAS** runoff from the snowpack caused by the winter storms could result in flood conditions in the Tulare Lake Basin resembling those last experienced in the historic floods of 1969 and 1983, following historic snowpacks in those years; and

**WHEREAS** local flood control districts and other local governments generally have flood control responsibility in the Tulare Lake Basin, but state agencies such as the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), the California Department of Water Resources, and the Governor's Office of Emergency Services are actively engaged in supporting this local effort, and state agencies will continue to provide technical advice and other resources and support as needed, with a particular priority on protecting the lives and health of local communities; and

**WHEREAS** stretches of the San Joaquin River have been or are at flood stage this spring, river stages are expected to stay high throughout the spring as snowpack melts, and multiple levee repairs are underway on the lower San Joaquin River; and

**WHEREAS** the Tulare Lake Basin is hydrologically connected to the San Joaquin River Basin and that connection has the potential to exacerbate the flood risk in the San Joaquin River Basin, and so further emergency response efforts may become necessary in the San Joaquin River Basin as well; and

**WHEREAS** heavy accumulation of snowfall on the roof of Bear Valley Elementary School, located in Alpine County, currently renders instructional space unsafe for use; and

**WHEREAS** frequent flooding and flood evacuation orders have resulted in school closures and low student attendance in Pajaro Middle School, Hall District Elementary School and Ohlone Elementary, located in Pajaro Valley Unified School District in Santa Cruz County; and

**WHEREAS** it is critical that displaced students are back in school facilities as quickly as possible to ensure continuity in education; and

**WHEREAS** the State of California and local governments, in collaboration with the Federal government, continue sustained efforts to respond to and mitigate the effects of these storms; and

**WHEREAS** on March 9, 2023, I requested a Presidential Emergency Declaration related to these late winter storms, which was expeditiously approved by President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.; and

**WHEREAS** on March 15, 2023, I requested the addition of 9 counties to the existing Presidential Emergency Declaration related to these late winter storms, which was expeditiously approved by the President; and

**WHEREAS** on March 28, 2023, I also requested the President issue a Major Disaster Declaration related to these late winter storms for counties that met the validated damage threshold; and

**WHEREAS** under the provisions of Government Code section 8571, I find that strict compliance with various statutes and regulations specified in this order would prevent, hinder, or delay the mitigation of the effects of these ongoing winter storms.

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, GAVIN NEWSOM**, Governor of the State of California, in accordance with the authority vested in me by the State Constitution and statutes, and in particular, Government Code sections 8567, 8571, and 8627, do hereby issue the following Order to become effective immediately:

**IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:**

1. All provisions contained in the above-referenced Proclamations of a State of Emergency shall remain in full force and effect.
2. To protect health, safety, and the environment, and to reduce the risks of local catastrophic flooding in the Tulare Lake Basin, Chapter 6 (commencing with section 1600) of Division 2 of the Fish and Game Code, and regulations adopted pursuant to that Chapter, are

suspended for activities that meet all of the requirements in Paragraph 3.

3. The suspension created by Paragraph 2 shall apply to floodwater diversion, debris removal, and levee repair and breach in the Tulare Lake Basin, on the condition that the actions cease when the flood conditions have abated to the point there is no longer flooding outside of defined streambeds and levees. Additionally, the suspension created by Paragraph 2 shall apply to floodwater diversion only if all of the following additional conditions are met:
  - a. The diversion of floodwater from the Tulare Lake Basin or rivers or streams flooding the Tulare Lake Basin must occur between March 31, 2023, and August 1, 2023, for flood management purposes.
  - b. For diversions directly from rivers or streams, a local or regional flood control agency, city, or county has given notice via its internet website, electronic distribution list, emergency notification service, or another means of public notice that flows downstream of the point of diversion are at imminent risk of flooding and inundation of land, roads, or structures.
  - c. For diversion of floodwaters in the Tulare Lake Basin (that is, waters no longer contained within a defined streambed or levee), a local or regional flood control agency, city, or county has given notice via its internet website, electronic distribution list, emergency notification service, or another means of public notice that areas from which the floodwaters are diverted are either at imminent risk of flooding or already flooded, with potential or existing inundation of land, roads, or structures.
  - d. Any water diverted is not diverted to and will not be applied to any area that has not been in active irrigated agricultural cultivation within the past three years, including grazing lands, annual grasslands, and natural habitats. This limitation does not apply to facilities already constructed for the purposes of groundwater recharge or managed wetlands.
4. In addition to the mandatory conditions set forth in Paragraph 3, any person conducting planned levee breaches or controlled inundation to prevent further catastrophic flooding pursuant to the suspension created by Paragraph 2 should take care, wherever feasible, to protect above-ground infrastructure and drinking water and wastewater infrastructure such as drinking water well field sites, wastewater discharge ponds, and other water resources that are necessary for the protection of human health and the recovery of impacted communities.
5. For purposes of conducting emergency flood preparation and response activities, for any (a) actions taken by state agencies, (b) actions taken by a local agency where the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency concurs that local action is required, and (c) permits necessary to carry out actions under (a) and (b), Public

Resources Code, Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000) and regulations adopted pursuant to that Division, are suspended to the extent necessary to address flood impacts in the Tulare Lake Basin.

6. To support adequate state staffing for all state agencies and departments with an assigned response and/or recovery role related to flooding in the Tulare Lake Basin, consistent with applicable federal law, work hour limitations for retired annuitants, permanent and intermittent personnel, and state management and senior supervisors are suspended. Furthermore, reinstatement and work hour limitations in Government Code sections 21220, 21224(a), and 7522.56(b), (d), (f), and (g), and the time limitations in Government Code section 19888.1 and California Code of Regulations, title 2, sections 300-303 are suspended. All other restrictions must be adhered to for retired annuitants. The Director of the California Department of Human Resources must be notified of any individual employed in state government pursuant to these suspensions. The suspension of statutes identified in this Paragraph shall also apply to local governments, as applicable, to ensure adequate staffing to appropriately respond to the flooding in the Tulare Lake Basin. Local governmental agencies shall notify the California Public Employees' Retirement System of any individual employed by an agency pursuant to this Paragraph.
7. The limitation for the period of employment for State Personnel Board emergency appointments, as provided in Government Code section 19888.1, is suspended for positions required for emergency response and/or recovery operations related to flooding in the Tulare Lake Basin. The requirements and period of employment for such appointments will be determined by the Office of Emergency Services but shall not extend beyond the termination date of the State of Emergency.
8. To the extent the Alpine County Office of Education and Alpine County Unified School District are required to use temporary facilities such as the Alpine County Public Library due to extraordinary snowpack on the roof of Bear Valley Elementary School, rendering instructional space unsafe, the requirements of Education Code sections 17280, et seq., 17365, et seq., and Government Code sections 4453 and 14963 are suspended with respect to those temporary facilities. The requirements of the California Building Code (codified in Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations), as adopted and enforced by the local building and fire agencies with jurisdiction over the area, shall apply to these temporary facilities.
9. To the extent the Alpine County Office of Education and Alpine County Unified School District are required to temporarily use buildings, as defined in the California Building Code (California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 2, Chapter 2, section 202), such as the Alpine County Public Library due to extraordinary snowpack on the roof of the Bear Valley Elementary School, rendering instructional space unsafe, local planning and zoning regulations shall be suspended to allow immediate occupancy of such buildings for use as public school facilities. In addition, the requirements of the California Building Code, as adopted and enforced by the local building and fire agencies with jurisdiction over the area, shall apply, except that the requirements

relating to Change of Use or Occupancy Classification in the California Building Code (California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 2, Chapter 1, section 111) shall not trigger immediate code upgrades, and a Certificate of Occupancy shall not be withheld for such immediate and temporary use of the facilities as a public school, as long as such facilities met building code requirements at the time of their construction, are accessible to individuals with disabilities, and are judged safe for use by the local building official.

10. Education Code section 60641 (a) requiring that all pupils be administered academic assessments in mathematics, English language arts, and science, as provided for in Education Code section 60640, is suspended for the 2022-2023 school year for Pajaro Middle School, Hall District Elementary School and Ohlone Elementary School of the Pajaro Valley Unified School District, if a federal waiver is approved by the United States Department of Education.

**I FURTHER DIRECT** that as soon as hereafter possible, this Order be filed in the Office of the Secretary of State and that widespread publicity and notice be given of this Order.

This Order is not intended to, and does not, create any rights or benefits, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity, against the State of California, its agencies, departments, entities, officers, employees, or any other person.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF** I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this 31st day of March 2023.



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GAVIN NEWSOM  
Governor of California

**ATTEST:**

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SHIRLEY N. WEBER, Ph.D.  
Secretary of State