EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

EXECUTIVE ORDER N-18-25

WHEREAS on January 7, 2025, I proclaimed a State of Emergency to exist in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties due to fire and windstorm conditions that have now caused multiple fires, including the Palisades, Eaton, Hurst, Lidia, Sunset, Woodley, and Hughes Fires; and

WHEREAS these fires have devastated communities across the Greater Los Angeles Area and have collectively burned over 47,900 acres, destroying or damaging more than 16,250 structures, including homes, small businesses, and places of worship, with initial estimates placing this disaster among the most destructive in California history; and

WHEREAS since the fires began, I have issued multiple Executive Orders to provide relief to impacted communities, protect survivors and expedite and aid recovery efforts, including orders streamlining permitting requirements to enable Los Angeles to build back quickly, and safer and more resilient than before; and

WHEREAS these fires were not isolated incidents, but rather the latest examples of how a changing climate creates weather extremes that can combine with wildfire-susceptible fuel loads, even during California's traditionally wet season, to cause massive conflagrations; and

WHEREAS the State's agencies responsible for fire response and resilience, including the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board of Forestry), the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), the Office of the State Fire Marshal, and the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), have already begun evaluating these fires, and should move quickly to incorporate standards, regulations, and statutes, to harden communities urgently; and

WHEREAS scientific research has shown that the greatest risk of embers directly or indirectly igniting a home, as occurred in many neighborhoods in the Palisades and Eaton firestorms, stems from combustible materials built or planted within five feet of a home, including perpendicular wood fences and combustible landscaping; and

WHEREAS because of the risk presented by embers, Assembly Bill No. 3074 (Friedman, 2020) requires promulgation of regulations to establish an ember-resistant "Zone Zero" within five feet of structures in certain fire severity zones, and insurance companies may factor wildfire mitigations such as Zone Zero clearance into insurance rates; and

WHEREAS the State Fire Marshal is responsible for periodically updating fire hazard severity zone maps for both the State Responsibility Area and the state's Local Responsibility Areas, and while the State Responsibility Area maps were updated in 2024, the Local Responsibility Area maps are due to be updated; and

WHEREAS CAL FIRE and Cal OES collaborate with the federal government and other states on operational plans for wildfire response, including mutual aid systems and sequences for dispatching resources, but the federally managed system, known as the Federal Interagency Resource Ordering Capability (IROC), lacks the capacity to process in real-time requests to dispatch additional resources for wildfire incidents of this magnitude, resulting in ad-hoc communication and coordination around such requests and imperfect visibility to resource availability and deployment as the incident response evolves; and

WHEREAS my 2025-2026 Budget proposal reflects a total of $4 billion for Wildland Management, which maintains $2.5 billion in prior investments and commits another $1.5 billion over the next several years to ramp up and implement my Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan, increasing the pace of fuel reduction, prescribed fire, and forest health; and

WHEREAS my Administration has invested $2 billion to support CAL FIRE operations, a 47% increase since 2018 and is committed to adding 2,400 additional firefighters to CAL FIRE's ranks over the next five years; and

WHEREAS my Administration has overseen the expansion of California's aerial firefighting fleet, including the addition of more than 16 helicopters equipped for night operations, and seven C-130 air tankers, making it the largest fleet of its kind globally; and

WHEREAS California is leveraging AI-powered tools to spot fires quicker, has deployed the Fire Integrated Real-Time Intelligence System (FIRIS) to provide real-time mapping of wildfires, and has partnered with the U.S. Department of Defense to use satellites for wildfire detection and invested in LiDAR technology to create detailed 3D maps of high-risk areas; and

WHEREAS in anticipation of severe fire weather conditions in early January 2025, Cal OES approved the prepositioning of 65 fire engines, as well as more than 120 additional firefighting resources and personnel throughout seven Southern California counties, and CAL FIRE moved firefighting resources to Southern California including 45 additional engines and six hand crews to the region; and

WHEREAS California was able to mobilize more than 15,000 personnel including firefighters, National Guard servicemembers, law enforcement officers and transportation teams to support the response to the Los Angeles firestorms, and more than 1,900 firefighting apparatus composed of engines, aircraft, dozers and water tenders to aid in putting out the fires.

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, do hereby issue the following Order to become effective immediately.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

1. The Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, in consultation with the State Fire Marshal, shall require the creation of an ember-resistant zone within 0 to 5 feet of a home ("Zone 0 regulations"), consistent with Public Resources Code section 4291 and Government Code section 51182. The Board of Forestry and Fire Protection shall post a pre-rulemaking draft regulation to its internet website and hold a public workshop to gather public input on its draft regulation within 45 days of this Order, and shall complete the formal rulemaking process no later than December 31, 2025.

2. The State Fire Marshal shall, consistent with Government Code sections 51178 and 51179, provide to local agencies, and make available to the public, its proposed Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps for Local Responsibility Areas (LRA). Maps representing different regions of the State shall be provided to the public in phases starting no later than February 10.

3. To ensure that resources are ordered and dispatched efficiently and effectively, the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) are directed to, in consultation with local, tribal, and federal partners and FIRESCOPE, work with the federal government to evaluate the Federal Interagency

Resource Ordering Capability (IROC), including its current limitations, and identify technology and process improvements to modernize a system that can fulfill the purpose of supporting the rapid fulfillment of mutual aid request during large-scale incidents.

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 6th day of February 2025.

GAVIN NEWSOM
Governor of California

ATTEST:

SHIRLEY WEBER, PH. D
Secretary of State