

Proclamation of Local Emergency Due to Drought Conditions throughout Plumas County

WHEREAS, conditions of drought persist throughout California and are presenting urgent and ongoing problems, risks and challenges for Plumas County and its residents; and

WHEREAS, extreme drought conditions pose a significant, unprecedented, and ongoing risk of severe and catastrophic wildfire, threatening homes, businesses, and public and private lands throughout the county; and

WHEREAS, diminished water supplies in area ponds, lakes, streams and water storage tanks used for firefighting will only limit firefighting capabilities and further exacerbate the risk of risk of severe and catastrophic wildfire; and

WHEREAS, drought conditions have negatively impacted local agricultural producers through diminished grazing allotments, reduced cultivation and harvests, forcing producers to seek alternate water supplies, and resulting in lost production and economic hardship; and

WHEREAS, drinking water sources including groundwater springs and wells, are experiencing diminished flows, turbidity, and other signs of distress due to drought and have forced residents and businesses long-dependent on these sources to minimize or abandon their use, deepen their well, drill new wells, use bottled or hauled water, or share domestic supply with neighbors, further stressing neighboring domestic wells; and

WHEREAS, the State Water Resources Control Board has sent a Notice of Curtailment of Diversions to junior water rights holders, including many residents, businesses and water supply systems dependent on isolated springs as their sole source of domestic water, preventing them from using their only domestic water supply and only local source of water for fire protection; and

WHEREAS, these Notices of Curtailment have been applied without consideration of exceptions for public health and safety, thereby further stressing public and individual drinking water supplies, forcing some businesses to close and placing drinking water systems at risk of not being able to supply an adequate amount of potable water to their customers or fire suppression water needed to protect and defend communities from catastrophic wildfire; and

WHEREAS, on August 13, 2015 the City of Portola declared a local emergency due to notices of diversion curtailment, reduced surface water use allocations, and the presence of naturally-occurring arsenic in the City's only backup domestic water supplies; and

WHEREAS, extremely dry conditions have persisted since 2012 and may continue beyond this year and more regularly into the future; and

WHEREAS, ongoing curtailments of local water supplies without exemptions for water needed to protect health and safety from catastrophic wildfire render the Governor's Drought Emergency Declaration contrary to the Governors State of Emergency for Northern California Wildfires; and

WHEREAS, local resources are, or are likely to be, inadequate to cope with the effects of this emergency, and the combined efforts of the State of California and the federal government may be necessary to assist the County of Plumas in its efforts to deal with this emergency;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS PROCLAIMED, pursuant to Article 14, Section 8360 of the California Emergency Services Act, a local emergency exists within and throughout Plumas County as of August 19, 2014. By means of this proclamation, the Director of Emergency Services is authorized to use and employ any of the property, services, personnel, and resources of the county public agencies and to command the aid of as many citizens as may be necessary to help mitigate this emergency. State agencies may provide mutual aid, including personnel, equipment, and other available resources as needed to assist Plumas County during this emergency.

Furthermore, Plumas County is seeking timely State Water Board relief for those junior water rights holders currently subject to surface water diversion curtailments when they can demonstrate a good-faith effort toward mandatory conservation and can certify that no alternative water supply is readily available. Plumas County is seeking the immediate suspension of curtailments of water supplies historically available for emergency firefighting that are now curtailed without exception. In order to protect our citizens during this extreme and peak fire danger period, Plumas County petitions for immediate access to existing wildfire safety water supplies while the State works through the laborious process of integrating and harmonizing the implementation of the Emergency Drought and the Emergency Wildfire Declarations in Northern California.

The Plumas County Board of Supervisors shall review the need for continuing the local emergency at least once every thirty (30) days until it is determined this proclamation is no longer necessary.

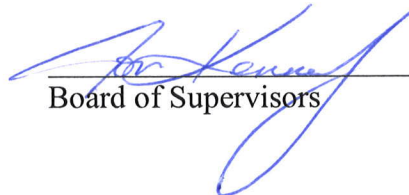
The forgoing resolution was duly passed and adopted by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Plumas, State of California at a regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors on August 19, 2014 by the following vote:

Ayes: SUPERVISORS THRALL, GOSS, SIMPSON, KENNEDY

Noes: NONE

Absent: SUPERVISOR SWOFFORD

Abstain: NONE



Chair,
Board of Supervisors

Attest:


Clerk of the Board of Supervisors