

NEWS

From the County of San Bernardino
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For more information, contact
David Wert, Public Information Officer
(909) 387-5412
dwert@sbcounty.gov

Chairman Biane declares local emergency due to freeze

Board of Supervisors Chairman Paul Biane today declared a local emergency to assist those who have suffered losses caused by persistent freezing weather.

Preliminary estimates tag at \$11,855,584 the damage attributable to the ongoing spate of extremely low overnight temperatures, which began on January 11 and is expected to continue for at least several more days.

That initial sum includes \$11,051,700 in agricultural losses, \$578,320 in damage to 148 residences and 214 private businesses, and \$69,564 in damage to 19 public facilities, including the Barstow and Victorville courthouses and the County office complex in the Big Bear Valley.

Additionally, many people have suffered respiratory problems due to the cold weather and have incurred bodily injuries caused by icy conditions. The freeze has also caused great hardships to the county's homeless population and to other residents who do not have the means to keep warm.

"The San Bernardino County freeze of 2007 has turned into a full-scale disaster, and many people in our county are suffering," Chairman Biane said today after signing the disaster declaration. "This declaration will put the victims in the best possible position to receive what ever forms of assistance become available."

County disaster officials are continuing to quantify damage related to the cold snap. Preliminary estimates are expected to skyrocket as soon as damage estimates from all of the county's communities and businesses – especially the county's \$44 million fruit and vegetable industry -- are tabulated.

The County declaration will be sent to the State Director of Emergency Services and the Governor in the hope that the state will proclaim a state of emergency in San Bernardino County. Chairman Biane will ask the Board of Supervisors to ratify the County declaration during the Board's next regular meeting on Tuesday, January 23.

A copy of Chairman Biane's declaration is attached.

COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

PROCLAMATION OF EXISTENCE OF A LOCAL EMERGENCY
(By Director of Emergency Services)

WHEREAS, California Government Code section 8630 and San Bernardino County Code section 21.0101 et seq. empower the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors to proclaim the existence or threatened existence of a local emergency when San Bernardino County is affected or likely to be affected by a public calamity and the Board of Supervisors is not in session; and

WHEREAS, the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Bernardino does hereby find:

That conditions of extreme peril to the health and safety of persons and property have arisen within and throughout San Bernardino County, caused by extremely low temperatures and freezing conditions beginning on January 11, 2007, and continuing to the present day, with the National Weather Service predicting several more days of below freezing temperatures in some areas of the County, and with such extreme weather conditions and freezing temperatures already having resulted in severe financial impact to the residents of this County, including preliminary estimates of physical damage to 148 primary residences and at least 214 business buildings mainly in the form of burst water pipes throughout the County, but primarily in mountain and high desert areas in the estimated amount of \$578,320, and damage to 2 water control facilities, 17 public buildings and equipment including the County Library, Barstow Courthouse, Victorville Courthouse, Big Bear County facility, and the construction site at the County morgue, and 1 park and recreation area in the additional estimated amount of approximately \$69,564, besides an unknown amount of damage to livestock and agricultural crops, including citrus, avocado, and strawberry crops, guava trees, and nursery stock, and severe economic impact to the citrus and other agricultural industries and the workers employed by these industries, and their families; and

That the citrus industry and other agricultural industries are vital to the economic health of the County, and have been severely impacted by the continuing freezing conditions in an amount estimated to already be \$11,051,700 due to frozen and damaged fruit, trees, and nursery stock; and

That the preliminary estimate for the total amount of direct monetary damages caused by the freeze and extremely cold weather conditions within the County is the sum of \$11,855,584; and

That the extremely low temperatures and freezing conditions throughout the County have also caused serious health problems to County residents and

visitors, especially those who are homeless, frail, and elderly, in the form of respiratory problems and broken bones from falls on ice, which have resulted in hospital emergency rooms, clinics, and physicians' offices being impacted by numerous persons seeking their medical and hospital services; and

That on January 12, 2007, the Governor of California proclaimed a state of emergency within the State of California as a result of continuing conditions of extreme low temperatures and freezing, and on January 16, 2007 further proclaimed a state of emergency due to extreme low temperatures and freezing conditions for the Counties of Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Tulare, and Ventura; and

That the aforesaid conditions of extreme peril warrant and necessitate the proclamation of the existence of a local emergency; and

That the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Bernardino is not in session and cannot immediately be called into session;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY PROCLAIMED that a local emergency now exists throughout said County; and

IT IS FURTHER PROCLAIMED AND ORDERED that during the existence of said local emergency the powers and duties of the emergency organization of the County shall be those prescribed by State law, by charter, ordinances, and resolution of this County, and by the current County of San Bernardino Emergency Plan, as approved by the Board of Supervisors.

IT IS FURTHER PROCLAIMED AND ORDERED that said emergency shall be deemed to continue to exist until its termination is proclaimed by the Board of Supervisors or it is terminated by operation of law.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that a copy of this proclamation be forwarded to the State Director of Emergency Services.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that a copy of this proclamation be forwarded to the Governor of the State of California, with the request that he proclaim that a State of Emergency exists within the County of San Bernardino.

Dated: Jan 17 2007
Time of Signing: 4:03 PM



PAUL BIANE
Director of Emergency Services,
County of San Bernardino and
Chairman of the Board of Supervisors,
County of San Bernardino