



## REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

**To:** Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

**From:** Jason Simpson, City Manager

**Prepared by:** Shannon Buckley, Assistant City Manager

**Date:** September 12, 2024

**Subject:** Confirmation of Proclamation of a Local Emergency Due to the Airport Fire

### **Recommendation**

Adopt A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LAKE ELSINORE, CALIFORNIA, CONFIRMING THE PROCLAMATION OF A LOCAL EMERGENCY DUE TO THE AIRPORT FIRE.

### **Background**

On September 9, 2024, a fire broke out in the vicinity of Trabuco Canyon, rapidly escalating into a significant threat to the health, safety, and welfare of the community. The fire, now referred to as the "Airport Fire," has resulted in extensive damage to nearby structures and infrastructure, with ongoing risks of further damage.

In response to the immediate and escalating danger, the City Manager issued a proclamation of a local emergency on September 10, 2024, in accordance with the authority granted by Lake Elsinore Municipal Code Section 2.20. Under the City's emergency protocols, this proclamation requires City Council confirmation within seven days to remain in effect and continue to authorize emergency actions.

### **Discussion**

The Airport Fire has had significant and wide-ranging impacts on the community. As of September 11, 2024, the fire has spread across approximately 22,376 acres, causing damage to [Insert Number] structures and threatening critical infrastructure. The fire's proximity to nearby residential areas has created an ongoing risk, particularly given forecasted high winds and continued dry conditions. In response, local authorities have issued evacuation orders affecting upwards of 6,000 residents and businesses, with temporary shelters established at Santiago High School in Corona, Temescal Canyon High School in Lake Elsinore, and The Bell Tower Regional Community Center in Rancho Santa Margarita to provide refuge for evacuees.

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The City's emergency response teams, working in collaboration with state and regional agencies such as Riverside County Fire, CAL FIRE, and Riverside County Emergency Management Services, have been mobilized to contain the fire and protect vulnerable areas. Despite these efforts, the fire remains an active threat, and the situation continues to evolve. Public safety remains the City's top priority, and all available resources are being deployed to mitigate the impact of this emergency. Ongoing efforts are focused on fire suppression, public safety, and providing necessary support to those displaced by the fire.

Since the issuance of the local emergency proclamation, the City has swiftly mobilized a coordinated emergency response. Fire suppression efforts have been the primary focus, with local fire departments working alongside mutual aid resources from neighboring jurisdictions. These teams are engaged in active firefighting and containment operations to minimize the spread of the fire. Additionally, evacuation centers have been established at Santiago High School in Corona, Temescal Canyon High School in Lake Elsinore, and The Bell Tower Regional Center in Rancho Santa Margarita to provide shelter, food, and medical care for displaced residents.

The City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has been activated to manage response efforts and to provide the public with up-to-date information on evacuation orders, safety precautions, and available resources. Communication has been delivered through multiple channels, including the City's website and social media platforms. Furthermore, resources and personnel have been deployed to assist with emergency operations, including approximately 10-15 staff members and emergency funds from the City's reserves, which are expected to be reimbursed. The situation remains fluid, and the City continues to focus on ensuring public safety, assessing damage, and preparing for recovery efforts once the fire is fully contained.

The Airport Fire has caused significant disruptions across the community, particularly for those living near the surrounding areas. As of September 11, 2024, the fire has forced the evacuation of 1,500 homes and businesses, displacing residents and disrupting daily life. Local businesses have been severely impacted, with several forced to close temporarily, resulting in lost revenue and economic uncertainty. In addition to these direct impacts, the fire has placed strain on emergency services, as resources are stretched to ensure both fire suppression and public safety efforts.

Following the confirmation of the local emergency proclamation, the City will continue focusing on fire containment and suppression efforts in coordination with regional and state agencies. Ensuring the safety of evacuated residents remains a priority, with ongoing support being provided at temporary shelters. Once the fire is fully contained, the City will shift its attention to assessing the damage and planning recovery efforts, including rebuilding infrastructure and providing assistance to affected residents and businesses. Additionally, the City will seek to secure state and federal resources to support recovery operations and long-term rebuilding. The situation will continue to be monitored closely, with further updates provided to the public as the response progresses.

The Airport Fire presents a significant and ongoing threat to public safety, infrastructure, and community well-being. The confirmation of the proclamation of a local emergency is necessary to

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ensure continued access to critical resources and authority to manage this crisis. It is recommended that the City Council confirm the proclamation and support ongoing emergency response and recovery efforts.

### **Fiscal Impact**

At this time, the fiscal impact of the emergency response and recovery efforts is unknown; however, these funds are expected to be reimbursed. This includes personnel costs, emergency resource deployment, and potential infrastructure repair.

### **Attachments**

Attachment 1 – Resolution

Exhibit A- Proclamation of Local Emergency (Dated September 10, 2024)

Attachment 2 - Proclamation of Local Emergency by the Riverside County Board of Supervisors

Attachment 3 – Proclamation of Local Emergency by the State of California

Attachment 4 - Map of Affected Areas

Services