



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Inter-Departmental Correspondence
Public Works



Date: November 13, 2015
Board Meeting Date: December 8, 2015
Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors
From: James C. Porter, Director of Public Works
Subject: FY 2015-16 Winter Storm Preparation

RECOMMENDATION:

Accept the report on the County's preparation for the coming FY 2015-16 Winter Storm Season.

BACKGROUND:

Weather forecasts for the upcoming 2015-16 winter indicate that the Bay Area is poised for a wetter than normal storm season. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is predicting a 95% chance that the Northern Hemisphere will continue to experience El Niño weather this winter, continuing through and weakening in the spring of 2016. The El Niño event has brought rising ocean temperatures, promising to energize upcoming winter storms. Heavy rains, coupled with severely stressed trees following four years of drought create the potential for severe flooding and mud slide events along both the San Mateo County coastside and bayside.

On October 20, 2015, the County adopted Resolution 074124, for a Public Works Mutual Aid Agreement with the 20 cities within the County. The agreement can be used to provide organized and voluntary mutual aid within San Mateo County. We are also working with the Santa Clara Valley Water District and the cities of Palo Alto, Menlo Park, and East Palo Alto on a mutual aid agreement to provide assistance in the event of flooding along San Francisquito Creek in the south eastern portion of the County.

DISCUSSION:

San Mateo County is the first responder for the unincorporated areas of the County, and is a partner with the 20 municipalities in the County to protect the safety and property of residents, businesses and employees of the area. In light of the expected heavy rainfall, County departments, including: the Office of Emergency Services (OES), the Sheriff's Office (SO), Public Safety Communications (PSC), County Fire, Public Works,

Planning and Building, the Human Services Agency (HSA), and Agriculture, Weights, and Measures, have taken actions to prepare for winter storm emergency response and recovery.

To prepare for the upcoming storm season, OES has conducted training with County departments and other agencies to familiarize first responders and support staff with emergency response protocols and recovery actions. PSC has readied their equipment and back-up systems to allow 24/7 operation during storm events and power outages. Operating departments such as Public Works, Planning and Building, and the SO made sure that infrastructure and equipment is fully functional and operating efficiently. Finally, HSA has worked with our partners in education and the Red Cross to ensure that shelter space is available and supplies on hand in the unfortunate event that temporary shelter is needed for those requiring evacuation and unable to immediately return to their homes.

We hope that this year's rainy season passes without the need to respond to flooding or mudslide events. However, if the need arises, the County and our partners are ready to respond to protect the health and safety of our constituents.

Approval of this report will contribute to the Shared Vision 2025 outcome of Collaborative Communities through acknowledgment of the shared preparation work and upcoming mutual response to the upcoming winter storms by the County and our partners.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Funding for the upcoming storm season preparation is included in affected departments operating budgets. There is no further budget impact at this time.

In the event that departments are required to provide emergency response activities for a prolonged period of time, it may be necessary to seek reimbursement for extraordinary expenses. In the event a state or federal disaster is declared, the County is typically eligible for reimbursement of 75% or eligible expenses.