



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: COUNTY MANAGER

File #: 20-658

Board Meeting Date: 9/15/2020

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors
From: Louise Rogers, Chief, San Mateo County Health
Scott Morrow, MD, San Mateo County Health Officer
Subject: Declaration of Local Health Emergency

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution ratifying and extending the declaration of local health emergency by the San Mateo County Health Officer.

BACKGROUND:

Section 101080 of the California Health and Safety Code authorizes a local health officer to declare a local health emergency within the health officer's jurisdiction, or any part of that jurisdiction, when the health officer determines that a hazardous waste or waste that may become a hazardous waste, is an immediate threat to public health.

Under the Health and Safety Code, a local health officer's declaration of a local health emergency shall remain in effect for no more than seven days, unless the declaration has been ratified by the governing authority of the local jurisdiction in which the local health emergency has been declared.

DISCUSSION:

On September 9, 2020, County Public Health Officer, Dr. Scott Morrow, declared a local health emergency in San Mateo County due to fires at various locations in the southern portion of the County which appear to have been caused by lightning strikes related to atypical weather patterns. These fires are being referred to as the CZU August Lightning Complex Fires.

Dr. Morrow's declaration notes that debris and ash from structure fires can contain hazardous substances and that waste and debris from fires may be hazardous waste that causes or significantly contributes to an increase in mortality or an increase in serious illnesses or that otherwise poses a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or the environment. Dr. Morrow's declaration also notes that immediate action is necessary to mitigate the harm that could be caused to the public health and safety and to the environment from improper disturbance, removal, and/or disposal of

hazardous waste from property sites located within the areas impacted by the CZU August Lightning Complex Fires.

As noted, under the Health and Safety Code, a local health emergency declared by a health officer shall remain in effect for no more than seven days unless it is ratified and extended by the governing authority of the jurisdiction where the local health emergency has been declared.

In light of current circumstances, we recommend that the Board of Supervisors ratify and extend the declaration of local health emergency. Under the Health and Safety Code, the Board of Supervisors must review the declaration of local health emergency at least once every thirty days to determine the need for continuing the local health emergency.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Approving the action recommended here may assist with the receipt of mutual aid resources from the State of California and from neighboring jurisdictions. Further, the approval of this action may assist the County in establishing eligibility for cost recovery funds related to the fires.