



November 6, 2015

Honorable Mark Leno, Chair
Joint Legislative Budget Committee
Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee

Honorable Shirley Weber, Chair
Assembly Budget Committee

Honorable Ricardo Lara, Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee

Honorable Jimmy Gomez, Chair
Assembly Appropriations Committee

Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery—Wildfire Debris Removal Costs

Pursuant to subdivision (c) of section 8690.6 of the Government Code, the following report is respectfully submitted.

In September, the state received approval of requests for Presidential major disaster declarations for the Valley and Butte Fires, which together have burned more than 145,000 acres, taken lives, and destroyed thousands of homes and structures.

The devastation caused by these fires is extraordinary. The state took immediate action to begin efforts to safely remove huge amounts of burned debris to eliminate the threat to lives, public health, and safety. Debris removal must continue expeditiously to enable community rebuilding and economic recovery of impacted communities. Debris hazards include asbestos, heavy metals, structural debris, ash, concrete foundations, and metals.

In order to provide funding for efforts needed immediately in the burned areas, the Department of Finance (Finance), pursuant to section 8690.6 (b) of the Government Code, authorized a transfer of \$10 million from the Special Fund for Economic Uncertainties to the Disaster Response-Emergency Operations Account to get debris removal started. That amount represented an initial transfer to the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle), the state entity coordinating debris removal efforts under the direction of the California Office of Emergency Services.

Additional funds are needed to aid the cleanup and debris removal efforts. In order to continue coordinated debris removal activities through the end of November, Finance, pursuant to section 8690.6 (b) of the Government Code, will be authorizing a transfer of an additional \$45 million from the Special Fund for Economic Uncertainties to the Disaster Response-Emergency Operations Account today.

Although this transfer will support cleanup efforts through the end of November, it is likely that total debris removal costs in the affected fire areas could exceed \$100 million. As a result of the federal disaster declaration, Finance expects that a significant amount of these costs will be eligible for federal reimbursement.

It is possible that CalRecycle's debris removal activities could continue beyond the 120 days authorized under section 8690.6 (a) of the Government Code. If additional funds are necessary beyond the timeframe authorized for the Disaster Response-Emergency Operations Account, the Administration would seek a supplemental appropriation to complete the necessary work. Finance will continue to monitor cleanup efforts related to the fires and will be assessing over the next several weeks the need for additional funding to support these efforts.

If you have any questions or need additional information regarding this matter, please call Matt Almy, Assistant Program Budget Manager at (916) 324-0043.

MICHAEL COHEN

Director

By:



KEELY M. BOSLER

Chief Deputy Director

cc: Honorable Jim Nielsen, Vice Chair, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
Honorable Melissa Melendez, Vice Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
Honorable Lois Wolk, Chair, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee No. 2
Honorable Richard Bloom, Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 3
Mr. Mac Taylor, Legislative Analyst (3)
Mr. Mark Ibele, Staff Director, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
Mr. Mark McKenzie, Staff Director, Senate Appropriations Committee
Mr. Seren Taylor, Staff Director, Senate Republican Fiscal Office
Mr. Craig Cornett, Senate President pro Tempore's Office (2)
Mr. Christian Griffith, Chief Consultant, Assembly Budget Committee
Mr. Pedro R. Reyes, Chief Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Mr. Eric Swanson, Staff Director, Assembly Republican Fiscal Committee
Mr. Jim Richardson, Policy and Fiscal Director, Assembly Republican Leader's Office
Mr. Christopher W. Woods, Assembly Speaker's Office (2)
Mr. Scott Smithline, Director, Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery
Mr. Ken DaRosa, Chief Deputy Director, Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery
Mr. Tom Estes, Deputy Director, Administration, Finance, and Information Services, Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery
Ms. Nancy Ward, Chief Deputy Director, California Office of Emergency Services