



September 24, 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.

During this past week, the state has 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 Valley Fire has burned over 75,111 acres and is considered one of the most destructive wildfires in California history. The state has already verified the destruction of 1,238 homes. More than 19,300 residents were ordered to evacuate and several hundred survivors remain in eight shelters. The fire has taken three lives and seriously injured four firefighters. Several residents remain missing and emergency responders anticipate the number of fatalities could grow.

The Butte Fire has burned over 70,760 acres. The state has already verified the destruction of 475 homes and 343 nonresidential properties. More than 12,000 residents were ordered to evacuate and nearly 100 survivors remain in three shelters. The Butte Fire has taken two lives and several residents are missing.

The devastation caused by these fires is extraordinary. Immediate action must be taken to safely remove huge amounts of burned debris to eliminate the threat to lives, public health, and safety. Fast debris removal is also necessary to enable community rebuilding and economic recovery of impacted communities. Debris hazards, including asbestos, heavy metals, structural debris, ash, concrete foundations, and metals pose public health and safety concerns and threaten the health of the local environment.

In order to provide funding for these efforts needed immediately in the burned areas, the Department of Finance (Finance), pursuant to section 8690.6 (b) of the Government Code, will be authorizing a transfer of \$10 million from the Special Fund for Economic Uncertainties to the Disaster Response-Emergency Operations Account today. This amount represents an initial transfer to the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) who will be coordinating the debris removal efforts under the direction of the California Office of Emergency

Services. Finance will be monitoring costs over the next several weeks and months and will notify the Legislature when additional funds are needed to continue fire debris removal activities. We know the costs will be greater and acknowledge additional funds will be needed to aid the cleanup effort. In addition, as a result of the Presidential major disaster declarations, a significant amount of the debris removal costs may be eligible for federal reimbursement. This initial allocation of \$10 million will provide funds for CalRecycle to get efforts underway as soon as possible.

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:

  
for 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  
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