



WASHOE COUNTY

Integrity Communication Service

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: August 25, 2026

DATE: August 10, 2026

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Dave Solaro, Assistant County Manager

THROUGH: Kate Thomas, County Manager

SUBJECT: Discussion and possible action to ratify the August 10, 2026, Declaration of State of Emergency by the Washoe County Manager. Pursuant to Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) Chapter 414 and Washoe County Code (WCC) 65.320 the Washoe County Manager declared an emergency to exercise the powers prescribed by state law, by Washoe County ordinances and resolutions, and by the Washoe County emergency plans in response to the August 8, 2026 Bug and Fred Mountain Fires near Cold Springs, Red Rock, Antelope Valley, Hungry Valley, and surrounding areas of Washoe County which was an event that threatened loss of life, injury to person or property, human suffering or financial loss to the extent that extraordinary measures must be taken to protect public health, safety, and welfare. (All Commission Districts.) FOR POSSIBLE ACTION

SUMMARY

Staff is requesting that the Board of County Commissioners ratify a state of emergency declared by the County Manager to exercise the powers prescribed by state law, by Washoe County ordinances and resolutions, and by the Washoe County emergency plans, in response to the August 8, 2026 Bug Fire and August 9, 2026 Fred Mountain Fire both fires near Cold Springs, Red Rock, Antelope Valley, Hungry Valley, and surrounding areas of Washoe County which was an event that threatened loss of life, injury to person or property, human suffering or financial loss to the extent that extraordinary measures must be taken to protect public health, safety, and welfare.

This action was necessary to ensure that Washoe County was able to rapidly mobilize resources, streamline administrative processes, and possibly access state and federal assistance as needed to address the impacts of the fire event. The declaration will remain in effect until it is determined by the County Manager or the Board that the emergency no longer exists or the threat has passed, at which point the state of emergency will be terminated in accordance with legal requirements.

AGENDA ITEM # _____

PREVIOUS ACTION

In recent years, the Board of County Commissioners has taken several actions under the authority of Nevada Revised Statutes Chapter 414 and Washoe County Code 65.320 to address emergency situations resulting from natural disasters. Notably, the Board has previously declared states of emergency in response to significant flooding events, including the January and February 2017 floods and the January 2023 severe storm, 2026 Hidden Valley flash flooding, each time enabling the County Manager to exercise emergency powers as prescribed by law and local ordinance. These actions have included the ratification of emergency declarations, authorization of extraordinary response measures, and coordination with state and federal agencies for disaster relief and recovery funding, as required by applicable statutes and codes.

BACKGROUND

The authority for Washoe County to declare a state of emergency in response to disasters such as the August 8th fire is established by Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) Chapter 414 and Washoe County Code (WCC) 65.320, which empower the County Manager and the Board of County Commissioners to take extraordinary measures when events threaten public health, safety, or welfare to a degree that exceeds the capacity of normal government operations. These legal frameworks define the conditions under which emergency powers may be exercised, including the delegation of specific authorities to the County Manager to implement emergency plans, coordinate interagency response, and manage resources as prescribed by law and local ordinance. The statutory and code provisions require that such declarations be based on findings that a natural or man-made event is causing or threatening significant harm, and they outline the procedural steps for both the initiation and termination of a local emergency. This approach ensures that Washoe County's emergency management actions are consistent with state law, local ordinances, and established emergency plans, providing a structured and legally sound basis for rapid response and recovery operations in the face of severe incidents such as fire.

FISCAL IMPACT

The response to the August fires will have fiscal implications for Washoe County. In accordance with Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) Chapter 414 and Washoe County Code (WCC) 65.320, the declaration enables the County to access emergency funding mechanisms and implement extraordinary measures that may require unanticipated expenditures beyond the scope of the current fiscal year budget.

Upon activation of emergency powers, the County Manager is authorized to reallocate resources, adjust staffing assignments, and incur costs necessary for immediate response and recovery operations, including but not limited to overtime, equipment procurement, emergency contracts, and support for displaced residents. These expenditures are tracked under a dedicated statistical order or emergency cost center, as established in prior emergency events.

Initial funding for emergency expenditures will be drawn from the County's General Fund or other available contingency reserves, such as use of the County established stabilization fund, consistent with established budgetary policies and emergency management protocols. The County's financial strategy emphasizes maintaining

sufficient reserves to address unforeseen events, and the Budget Division will coordinate with the Comptroller's Office to ensure that all emergency-related transactions are properly recorded and reported in accordance with governmental accounting standards. It is important to note that while the declaration facilitates access to external funding, not all costs may be reimbursable, and the County may ultimately bear all or a portion of the financial burden associated with the event. The fiscal impact will be further refined as response and recovery operations progress and as claims for reimbursement are processed by state or federal agencies. The Board will be provided with periodic updates on the status of expenditures, funding requests, and any budget augmentations required to support ongoing emergency management activities.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Board ratify the August 10, 2026, Declaration of State of Emergency by the Washoe County Manager. Pursuant to Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) Chapter 414 and Washoe County Code (WCC) 65.320 the Washoe County Manager declared an emergency to exercise the powers prescribed by state law, by Washoe County ordinances and resolutions, and by the Washoe County emergency plans in response to the August 8, 2026 Bug and Fred Mountain Fires near Cold Springs, Red Rock, Antelope Valley, Hungry Valley, and surrounding areas of Washoe County which was an event that threatened loss of life, injury to person or property, human suffering or financial loss to the extent that extraordinary measures must be taken to protect public health, safety, and welfare.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board agree with the staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be: "Move to ratify the August 10, 2026, Declaration of State of Emergency by the Washoe County Manager. Pursuant to Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) Chapter 414 and Washoe County Code (WCC) 65.320 the Washoe County Manager declared an emergency to exercise the powers prescribed by state law, by Washoe County ordinances and resolutions, and by the Washoe County emergency plans in response to the August 8, 2026 Bug and Fred Mountain Fires near Cold Springs, Red Rock, Antelope Valley, Hungry Valley, and surrounding areas of Washoe County which was an event that threatened loss of life, injury to person or property, human suffering or financial loss to the extent that extraordinary measures must be taken to protect public health, safety, and welfare."