

CITY OF AGOURA HILLS

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
FROM: Craig A. Steele, City Attorney
DATE: October 3, 2005
SUBJECT: Ratification of Declaration of Local Emergency - September 29, 2005

REQUEST

The City Council is requested to review and ratify the Declaration of Local Emergency in the City of Agoura Hills issued by the City's Director of Emergency Services at approximately 1:00 a.m. on September 29, 2005 as a result of the fire burning in the vicinity of the City.

BACKGROUND

Article III, Chapter 6 of the Agoura Hills Municipal Code ("AHMC") sets forth the City's Emergency Organization laws. Pursuant to his authority under AHMC Sections 3604 and 3605 the City Manager, acting in his capacity as the City's Director of Emergency Services, declared a Local Emergency due to the Topanga Fire at approximately 1:00 a.m. on September 29, 2005. The City Council is required by local and state law to review and, if appropriate, ratify that proclamation within 7 days and at every regular meeting thereafter until the Local Emergency is terminated.

At approximately 9:28 p.m. on the evening of September 28, 2005, the City's Emergency Operations Center ("EOC") was opened in response to the brush fire that started in the Simi Valley/Chatsworth area earlier that day. At approximately 10:45 p.m., the City was notified that the evacuation of animals had been recommended in certain areas of the City and its environs. At approximately 1:00 a.m., with knowledge of actual and threatened conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property in the City due to the proximity and anticipated course of the fire, the Director of Emergency Services declared that a Local Emergency existed. At 1:42 a.m, residents of Old Agoura were ordered to evacuate. At approximately 3:40 a.m., residents of those areas of the City north of the 101 and east of Kanan Road were ordered to evacuate. At approximately 4:14 a.m. additional mandatory and voluntary evacuation orders for other areas of the City were issued.

Throughout the day on September 29, 2005, additional public safety steps were taken, including the closure of local public and private schools, libraries and public facilities. City employees manned the EOC and other posts pursuant to the City's emergency plans. The County of Los Angeles declared a Local Emergency on the morning of September 29, 2005. As of 10:00 p.m., some residents were permitted back into their neighborhoods and streets in the City were reopened, although the library, schools and other public facilities remained closed. As of this

CITY OF AGOURA HILLS
MEMORANDUM

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
October 3, 2005
Page 2

writing, the fire was only 20% contained and had burned over 20,000 acres. Thankfully, there were no lives lost in the City and property damage thus far appears minimal. Nonetheless, the state of Local Emergency remains in effect as firefighters continue their work.

The declaration of a Local Emergency permits the Director of Emergency Services and the City Council to adopt regulations and issue orders necessary for the protection of lives and property. It also assists the City and the County of Los Angeles in recovering costs of responding to the disaster. In this case, the Director of Emergency Services and the City Attorney recommend that the state of Local Emergency be ratified by the City Council, and that it remain in effect until the emergency conditions have been fully abated, in the judgment of the Director. This action, if ratified by the City Council, will be reviewed at every regular City Council meeting thereafter until the state of Local Emergency is terminated.

RECOMMENDATION

If the Council concurs and ratifies the actions of the Director of Emergency Services, the appropriate motion would be to adopt Resolution No. 05-1390 (attached), ratifying the Director of Emergency Service's declaration of a Local Emergency on September 29, 2005.

cc: Greg Ramirez, City Manager
Kimberly Rodrigues, CMC, City Clerk