

MOTION

BUDGET & FINANCE

The California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA) authorizes the Director of the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) to administer a disaster assistance program that provides financial assistance from the state for costs incurred by local governments as a result of a disaster event or a “similar public calamity that the Governor determines presents a threat to public safety.” Under Section 8686.4 of the Government Code, when the Director determines there are mitigation measures that are cost-effective and substantially reduce the risk of future damage, hardship, loss, or suffering in an area where a state of emergency has been proclaimed by the Governor, the Director may authorize the implementation or replacement of mitigation measures.

Proactive measures are key. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) estimates that climate-related disasters cost the US \$306 billion in 2017. The National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS) recently evaluated 23 years of federally-funded mitigation grants, and found that the nation can save \$6 in future disaster costs for every spent on hazard mitigation.

On December 5, 2017, Governor Brown declared a state of emergency in Los Angeles County due to the uncontrollable wildfires driven by hurricane-force winds that burned portions of the City and other nearby locations. “We also have to deal with the larger challenge, which is climate change itself,” he said.

Los Angeles fire chief, Ralph Terrazas called conditions the worst he’d seen in his 31-year career. The atmosphere over California was the driest in recorded history. Unprecedented wind strength reached a new color classification of purple, which means “extreme.” In eighty-mile an hour winds, there is no ability to fight fires.

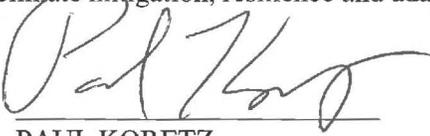
The Creek, Thomas and Skirball fires, which started in December 2017, prompted the evacuation of more than 200,000 Southern California residents. More than 1,100 structures and 307,900 acres burned with over 25,000 homes and many more acres of chaparral and forest at extreme risk throughout the region. Mudslides that followed killed at least 20 people, with many still missing.

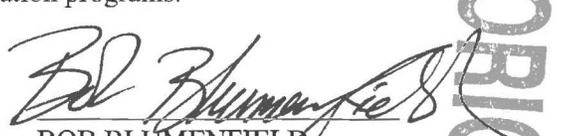
A second consecutive La Niña year may extend and exacerbate dry conditions overall, while an associated atmospheric river event would elevate risks of catastrophic flooding, slope erosion, and debris flows.

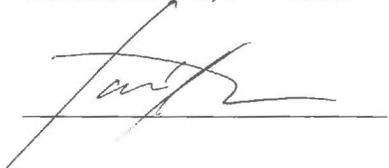
With so much at stake, it is essential for the City to take an even stronger, more active leadership role in fighting the causes of climate change by mobilizing citywide toward immediate greenhouse gas emissions reductions and the effects of climate disruption through enhanced emergency climate mitigation and adaptation programs.

Section 8686.4 funds could be used for the purposes of establishing a Climate Emergency Mobilization Department and a Climate Emergency Reserve Fund designed to plan and coordinate the City’s emergency climate mitigation and adaptation programs citywide.

I MOVE that the City Council direct the Chief Legislative Analyst to immediately prepare an application for emergency mitigations funds from the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services, per section 8686.4 of the State Government Code, for the purposes of establishing a Los Angeles Climate Emergency Mobilization Department and Climate Emergency Reserve Fund to plan and coordinate emergency climate mitigation, resilience and adaptation programs.

PRESENTED BY:   
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