



News from the Emergency Management Committee Chair (4/16/21)

Upcoming Policy Hearing

When: Monday, April 19, 2021 at 2:30 pm

Where: State Capitol, Room 437

WATCH: Governor Newsom to Sign \$536 Million Wildfire Prevention Plan

[ABC News 7 reports](#) Governor Newsom plans to sign a \$536 million funding plan to prevent wildfires across the state. The Governor traveled to Butte County on Tuesday morning to sign the bill into law.

State officials say the legislative action will accelerate fire prevention projects in California. Newsom is also expected to look at the prep work being done to protect residents in Butte County.

To watch the full video of Governor Newsom in Butte County, [please click here](#).

California is Poised for a Catastrophic Fire Season. Experts Say Plan Isn't Nearly Enough

[The Guardian reports](#) California's governor on Tuesday approved a half-a-billion-dollar emergency funding plan to prepare for the looming wildfire season. The state, which saw its worst fire season on record last year, is descending deep into a drought that portends even more mega-blazes this year. However, experts say that while the huge spending plan is a start, it isn't nearly enough to avert the crisis ahead.

"We are in a very deep hole that we're going to have to dig ourselves out of," said Chris Field, climate scientist at Stanford University.

Global heating has brought more frequent, extreme droughts and heat waves to California, drying out the landscape and fueling larger, more destructive fires in recent years. Last year, the state saw five of the six largest fires in state history, after a lack of rain and a heat wave dried out fire-fueling vegetation across the region's wildlands. This year is tied for the third-driest year in state history – and the desiccated landscape is primed to burn. "We're definitely looking at a serious challenge ahead," Field said.

As the state heads into its dry, summer season, its reservoirs remain at about half capacity. The region is so dry that the chamise plants that cover the state's chaparral landscape didn't sprout or

flower this year in some locations. Instead, the highly flammable vegetation has already started to dry out – transforming into kindling that could invite more destructive fires, earlier than usual.

Facing high odds of an intense fire season to come, Governor Gavin Newsom announced last week that state leaders would allocate \$536m to hire more firefighters, improve forest management efforts, thin out fire-fueling vegetation and make homes more fire-resistant.

The state would have to adapt quickly to changing climate, and more fire, the governor said when he signed the proposal into law on Tuesday.

Already this year, California has seen more than 1,160 fires burn 3,304 acres across the state. Over the past five years, an average of about 550 acres burned during the same time period.

The plan “is a step in the right direction”, said Don Hankins, a pyrogeographer and Plains Miwok fire expert at California State University, Chico. Hankins, along with other indigenous fire experts and researchers in California, has been pushing state leaders to direct more funds and resources toward prescribed burning – using small controlled burns to clear out fire-fueling vegetation, renew the soil and prevent bigger, runaway wildfires. Hundreds of tribes across California used prescribed burns for thousands of years until European settlers outlawed the practice.

Hankins said he was heartened that the state’s fire plan had earmarked money for prescribed burning – but he said it left out key details. For instance, since the majority of forests in California are managed by the federal government, rather than the state, California’s plans to ramp up prescribed burning will be largely contingent on the US government for funding and staffing. And while the plan promises partnership with “tribal entities”, it’s short on details about how, exactly, the partnership would work.

Moreover, because Californians banned prescribed burning for more than a century, Hankins said it would take a much bigger investment to burn through the backlog. In Western Australia, where the local government has reinstated and adapted Aboriginal burning practices, about half the fire budget is spent on prescribed burning.

An estimated 4.5m to 12m acres used to burn annually in California in pre-colonial times, though much of that fire was less intense and intentionally set, coaxed away from areas where people lived. “That’s a lot more than the 4m acres than burned last year,” Hankins said. The state’s current goal of treating at least 100,000 acres with prescribed fire by 2025 “is good – it’s a start. But it won’t be nearly enough.”

The plan also sets aside \$25m to grant food to low-income homeowners to fund the updates and renovations needed to fireproof their homes. “Of course, it’s good – but the question is how far will this money go?” said Stephanie Pincetl, a professor at the UCLA Institute of the Environment and Sustainability who specializes in the intersection of urban planning and environmental policy.

To view the full article with further expert opinions, [please click here](#).

California Pauses Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 Vaccine Following Feds’ Recommendation

[The Tri-City Herald reports](#) California is following U.S. health officials' recommendation to pause administering the single-dose COVID-19 vaccine from Johnson & Johnson as federal officials investigate a handful of reports of severe blood clots in recipients.

Governor Newsom's office and the California Department of Public Health in statements Tuesday morning said the state has directed providers to "pause the use" of the J&J vaccine.

The CDPH says California is "convening the Western States Scientific Safety Review Group" – the state's panel of scientific experts who independently review the vaccines authorized for use in the U.S. – to "review the information provided by the federal government."

California was slated this week to receive only 67,600 J&J doses due to the supply issue – down substantially from the 572,700 allocated for last week, according to the CDC data. The state is scheduled to get close to 1.9 million total first and second doses of Pfizer and Moderna. However, the governor's office issued a statement saying, "our vaccine allocations will not be significantly impacted."

CDPH, in a written statement from state epidemiologist Dr. Erica Pan, said the J&J vaccine represented "less than 4%" of California's allocated supply for this week.

Newsom announced last week that California plans to reopen its economy, dropping nearly all COVID-19 restrictions aside from the mask mandate, on June 15 — provided that hospitalization rates are low enough and vaccine supply flow high enough to do so.

[The governor's statement Tuesday morning](#) maintains that California remains "set to fully reopen on June 15."

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in a joint statement early Tuesday said they are investigating six U.S. cases "of a rare & severe type of blood clot in individuals after receiving the vaccine."

More than 6.8 million shots of the J&J vaccine have been administered to date, according to the CDC.

"Right now, these adverse events appear to be extremely rare," the FDA wrote, but the agencies are "recommending a pause in the use of this vaccine out of an abundance of caution."

The CDC will hold an advisory meeting Wednesday to review the cases that are being investigated, and the FDA will review the CDC's assessment.

It is unclear how long the pause may last. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine was cleared for emergency use at the end of February.

Tuesday's announcement marks the first federally recommended pause for any of the three COVID-19 vaccines that have been authorized for emergency use in the U.S.

A Look at the Many Groups Profoundly Affected by COVID-19

[Clinical Oncology News reported](#) on four recent studies that discuss how the virus affected different groups of people. *Clinical Oncology News* recognizes that this is a small sampling for the studies. The article with summaries of the [four studies is linked here](#).

The first study is entitled, “Symptoms of Anxiety, Burnout, and PTSD and the Mitigation Effect of Serologic Testing in Emergency Department Personnel During the COVID-19 Pandemic.” The focus was on HCWs unique stressors faced during COVID-19, across the U.S. [You can find the full study here.](#)

The second study is entitled, “Initial Effects of COVID-19 on Patients with ESKD,” and focuses on the impact of COVID-19 on people with kidney failure. [The full study can be found here.](#)

The third study is entitled, “Symptoms and Functional Impairment Assessed 8 Months After Mild COVID-19 Among Health Care Workers,” and found that 1 in 10 people have long-term effects 8 months following mild COVID-19. [The full study is linked here.](#)

The fourth, and final, study is entitled, “COVID-19 Mortality in California Based on Death Certificates: Disproportionate Impacts Across Racial/Ethnic Groups and Nativity.” This study found that Hispanic immigrants of working age are at the highest risk of death from COVID-19. [The full study can be found here.](#)

COVID Reopening: California Lifts Capacity Limits on Houses of Worship in Wake of Supreme Court Ruling

[CBS San Francisco reports](#) California public health officials announced Monday that COVID-19 capacity limits on houses of worship have been lifted, following last week’s Supreme Court decision.

“In response to recent judicial rulings, effective immediately, location and capacity limits on places of worship are not mandatory but are strongly recommended,” [said a statement posted on the state’s COVID-19 website](#) on Monday. “The linked guidance is in the process of being updated. All other restrictions in the guidance remain in place.”

Under the updated guidance, houses of worship in Purple Tier counties are “strongly discouraged” to hold indoor activities and are recommended at a 25% capacity limit. Capacity limits of 25% are being urged in Red Tier counties, while 50% is being urged in Orange Tier and Yellow Tier counties.

The change comes after the court’s conservatives sided with a Bible study group in Santa Clara County that challenged the state’s limits on indoor home gatherings to three households. In a 5-4 decision handed down on Friday, the court said that such restrictions couldn’t be enforced on home-based religious gatherings such as Bible studies and prayer meetings.

Chief Justice John Roberts sided with the court’s liberal justices in saying the limits should have remained in place for the time being.

“California treats some comparable secular activities more favorably than at-home religious exercise, permitting hair salons, retail stores, personal care services, movie theaters, private suites at sporting events and concerts, and indoor restaurants to bring together more than three households at a time,” said the unsigned order from the court’s conservative justices.

In a dissent from the court’s liberal justices, Justice Elena Kagan said the majority’s decision was hurting state officials’ ability to address a public health emergency.

“California limits religious gatherings in homes to three households. If the State also limits all secular gatherings in homes to three households, it has complied with the First Amendment. And

the State does exactly that: It has adopted a blanket restriction on at-home gatherings of all kinds, religious and secular alike. California need not ... treat at-home religious gatherings the same as hardware stores and hair salons,” Kagan wrote.

The state has previously announced that indoor gatherings, including concerts and sporting events, would be allowed with capacity restrictions starting Thursday, amid an ongoing drop in COVID-19 cases.

Scientific American Declares ‘Climate Emergency’

[KXAN reports](#) *Scientific American* announced on Monday that it would join other scientific media outlets around the world and stop using the term “climate change” and start using “climate emergency” instead.

Scientific American joins Columbia Journalism Review, the Nation, the Guardian, Noticias Telemundo, Al Jazeera, Japan’s Asahi Shimbun and Italy’s La Repubblica among others in its decision.

Referencing recent meteorological catastrophes, including the Texas winter storm back in February, as its reasoning behind the move: “A hurricane blasts Florida. A California dam bursts because floods have piled water high up behind it. A sudden, record-setting cold snap cuts power to the entire state of Texas. These are also emergencies that require immediate action. Multiply these situations worldwide, and you have the biggest environmental emergency to beset the earth in millennia: climate change”.

Additionally, just last week, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reported that despite the decline in global travel and economic activity due to covid-19, carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses continued to rise to levels never seen before.

Scientific American’s declaration comes at a time when 1,859 jurisdictions (including the Austin City Council and Travis County) in 33 countries have issued climate emergency declarations covering more than 820 million people.

According to an [article](#) by Yahoo! News, “If global warming isn’t dramatically slowed and global average temperatures do rise by 7.2 degrees (4 degrees Celsius), over one-third of the entire Antarctic ice shelf will be at risk of collapse, said a second study conducted by researchers at the [University of Reading](#), submerging whole countries and [states like Florida](#) and setting off the largest migration in human history.

But sea level rise is just one of several threats facing mankind if global temperatures continue to rise, as the statement from Scientific American and the other media outlets made clear.

“Failure to slash the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere will make the extraordinary heat, storms, wildfires and ice melt of 2020 routine and could ‘render a significant portion of the Earth uninhabitable,’” the statement said, quoting from an article in, where else, [Scientific American](#).

You can find Scientific American’s full declaration [here](#).

Biden Taps California Safety Chief to Lead Federal OSHA

[JD Supra reports](#) President Joe Biden announced late last week that he intends to nominate Doug Parker as the head of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Parker has led the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) since 2019 and has made a name for himself prioritizing workplace safety through aggressive enforcement tactics. If confirmed by the Senate, Parker would fill a position that has been vacant since January 2017. OSHA's stated mission is to "assure safe and healthy working conditions for working men and women by setting and enforcing standards and by providing training, outreach, education and assistance," and the agency is tasked with enforcing a variety of whistleblower and safety regulations. What do employers need to know about the April 9 announcement?

The White House's [press release](#) notes that Parker previously served in the Obama Administration as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy in the Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration, and was a member of the Biden administration's transition team focused on worker health and safety issues. Prior to leading Cal/OSHA, Parker was executive director of Worksafe, a legal services provider.

The White House noted that Parker was previously a partner at the law firm Mooney, Green, Saindon, Murphy and Welch in Washington, D.C., before serving in the Obama administration. He started his legal career as a staff attorney at the United Mine Workers of America. He earned his Juris Doctorate degree at the University of Virginia School of Law, and his Bachelor of Arts in history from James Madison University.

Workplace safety observers note that Parker has demonstrated an aggressive approach to safety measures during his Cal/OSHA stint by implementing a broad COVID-19 enforcement initiative. In most instances, California has outpaced the federal government and other states when it comes to setting strict pandemic-related safety rules, and one can begin to imagine whether he will bring the same sensibilities to the OSHA leadership role.

The Biden administration has pledged to make significant changes to the American workplace, including an expansion of workers' rights. Parker will be responsible for implementing many of those changes.

Given the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic is still ongoing, and the Biden administration's push for a federal emergency temporary standard to address the pandemic, Parker's first focus will likely be addressing these issues. The recently implemented National Emphasis Program will provide the initial avenue, but Parker could take his experience in implanting Cal/OSHA's emergency temporary standard and implement a similar standard at the federal level.

The Biden administration has made it clear that they intend "double the number of OSHA investigators to enforce the law and existing standards and guidelines." It will likely take around 18 months for new inspectors to be trained and begin conducting inspections. Once those new compliance officers are in the field, you can expect more OSHA inspectors knocking on your doors.

Parker will also likely restart many Obama-era rules that had been shelved over the past four years, including the rule requiring certain employers to report detailed injury and illness information to OSHA. This information would then be posted online for public viewing on

OSHA's website. This rule was never actually repealed but was largely abandoned under the Trump administration.

Workplace safety enforcement will be more aggressive and robust under an OSHA governed by the Biden administration, and Parker will be tasked with overseeing those enforcement efforts. You should prepare for these more aggressive policies by ensuring that your safety and health programs are compliant with rules that, while not enforced during the Trump administration, are still in place and govern American workplaces. You should work with your safety consultants and legal counsel to identify and eliminate workplace safety hazards.

First NENA i3-compliant NG911 Call to be Delivered April 14th in California

[Urgent Communications reports](#) a California county today is expected to deliver what is believed to be the first end-to-end call to a 911 public-safety answering point (PSAP) that meets the National Emergency Number Association (NENA) i3 standard for next-generation 911 (NG911), according to officials with the state of California and NENA.

Budge Currier, 911 and emergency-communications branch manager for California, made the announcement Tuesday during NENA's virtual "911 Goes to Washington" event and shared a diagram of the call flow. Conspicuously absent from the i3 call processing is a reliance on many legacy 911 components like a selective router, automatic number identification/automatic location identification (ANI/ALI) or a master street address guide (MSAG).

"We're excited that, on April 14—which is tomorrow—we will be doing our first end-to-end i3 call in California," Currier said during the presentation. "We're aggregating calls from T-Mobile across a variety of devices. They're being sent to Inteliquent, who is delivering them to NGA 911—one of our regional providers ... They will deliver that information to the Tuolumne County sheriff, and we will deliver the first true NENA i3 end-to-end that we're aware of anywhere in the nation.

Currier said that state officials are "extremely excited" about California 911 centers beginning the migration to the IP-based NENA i3 platform, which is designed to support next-generation capabilities, including the receipt of multimedia communications, geospatial routing, and more efficient sharing of emergency call data with other 911 centers, when necessary.

Currier said that deployment of the i3 capabilities in other California 911 centers will continue in May and be executed throughout the rest of the year—a timetable he previously has noted as being realistic, if it is not undermined by unforeseen emergency events. In addition to the entities involved in this first end-to-end i3 call, regional providers for deployments elsewhere in the state include Lumen (formerly CenturyLink) and Synergem, he said.

Once the core broadband connectivity between California 911 centers is in place, the state will turn its attention to facilitating a migration statewide to call-processing equipment within the 911 centers that is designed to fully leverage the next-generation capabilities as efficiently as possible, Currier said.

"Once we build this NENA i3 next-gen-911 system, we will have basically built a superhighway," Currier said. "The next step then will be to bring in video, media and all of these other technologies onto this superhighway, and we're working with the carriers right now [to determine] what those connections and interfaces would look like.

“The problem is, most of our call-processing equipment that’s out there in the state today can’t support all of these rich features in its current state—essentially, it’s like driving a Model T vehicle on this superhighway that we’ve created. So, our next step will be to deploy cloud-based CPE throughout the network that will support all of these rich data sources that we’ve been talking about for next-gen 911. We’ll begin those deployments next year.”

Funding Opportunities

Division of Boating and Waterways Local Assistance Quagga and Zebra Mussel Infestation Prevention Grant Program

[The Department of Parks and Recreation](#) has provided funding for prevention plans and implementation activities that help protect California’s reservoirs from a quagga and zebra (dreissenid) mussel infestation.

DBW’s Quagga and Zebra Mussel Infestation Prevention Grant Program (QZ Grant Program) provides funding for two tiers/two types of projects:

1. Planning and Assessment projects; and
2. Implementation projects

Examples of projects include:

- Developing prevention plans
- Purchasing pressure washers/decontamination units, inspection programs including staffing, materials, and supplies

DBW coordinates and collaborates with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife on many aspects of this program.

Eligible applicants include nonprofits, public agencies, and tribal governments.

1. The applicant must own or manage a reservoir or manage any aspect of the water in a reservoir, which could include the recreational activities in a reservoir, where recreational activities are permitted.
2. The reservoir must be uninfested with quagga and zebra mussels; early-detection monitoring data is required, collected between March 2020 and the date of application.
3. The reservoir must be open to the public for recreational activities.

Eligible geographies include reservoirs within California. The deadline to apply is **Friday, April 30, 2021**. Total estimated funding available is \$3 million. To view the full grant guidelines, [click here](#). To view the online application, [click here](#).

Song-Brown Healthcare Workforce Training Programs – Primary Care Residencies (PCR)

[The Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development](#) has created the Song-Brown Program to fund institutions that train primary care health professionals to provide health care in California’s medically underserved areas.

Awardees shall use the funding to expand primary care services. The funding will support Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynecology (OB/GYN), and Pediatric residency programs.

Eligible applicants include nonprofit and public agencies. The deadline to apply is **Friday, May 7, 2021**. Total estimated funding available is \$31 million. To view the full grant guidelines, [click here](#). To view the online application, [click here](#).

Replacing, Removing, or Upgrading Underground Storage Tanks Grant

[The State Water Resources Control Board](#) has created these RUST grants to be used to finance up to 100 percent of the costs necessary to upgrade, remove, or replace UST project tanks to comply with the requirements of Health and Safety Code sections 25284.1, 25292.05, 25292.4, 2529.5, or 41954.

Replacing, Removing, or Upgrading Underground Storage Tanks (RUST) grants are available to assist small business underground storage tank (UST) owners and operators in financing up to 100 percent of the costs necessary to upgrade, remove, or replace project tanks to comply with the requirements of Health and Safety Code section 25284.1, 25292.05, 25292.4, 25292.5, or 41954. Please note that removal-only projects are now eligible for RUST grants.

Grants are available for between \$3,000 and \$70,000 to eligible UST owners/operators. An additional \$140,000 in RUST grant moneys above the \$70,000 maximum is available for remote public fueling stations for the purpose of removing and replacing a single-walled UST. (See Health and Safety Code § 25299.107(e) for more information.)

Grant applicants must be a UST owner and/or operator and meet all of the following requirements:

- The applicant is a small business that employs fewer than 20 full-time and part-time employees, is independently owned and operated, and is not dominant in its field of operation;
- The grant applicant's principal office and its officers must be domiciled in California;
- The facility where the project tank is located was legally in business retailing gasoline after January 1, 1999;
- All of the tanks owned and operated by the grant applicant are subject to compliance with Health and Safety Code chapter 6.7 and implementing regulations;
- The facility where the subject tank is located has sold, at retail, less than 900,000 gallons of gasoline annually for each of the two years preceding the submission of the grant application; (Gallons is based upon taxable sales figures provided to the State Board of Equalization (BOE) on the grant applicant's BOE 401 GS including Schedule G.)
- The grant applicant meets either of the following:
 - The grant applicant is in compliance with Health and Safety Code sections 41954 and 25290.1, 25290.2, 25291, or subdivisions (d) and (e) of section 25292; (The facility must provide a current UST permit, a current Permit to Operate, and proof of EVR compliance as evidence of compliance with the permit compliance requirements.) or
 - The grant applicant meets the requirements for a waiver from the RUST grant permit compliance requirements. (The project is for removal-only and the grant applicant does not qualify for a RUST loan.)

This is not a reimbursement program. Work cannot begin until you have an agreement executed by the State Water Board.

Total estimated funding available is \$70,000. The deadline to apply is **Friday, December 31, 2021**. To view the full grant guidelines, [please click here](#).

Forest and Watershed Health Directed Grants Program

[Sierra Nevada Conservancy](#) has created the Forest and Watershed Health Directed Grants Program to support projects that create or improve forest conditions that result in a combination of multiple watershed, ecosystem, and community benefits.

The specific focus areas of the Forest and Watershed Health Directed Grants Program are outlined below. To be considered for funding, projects must fall within at least one (or more) of the focus areas:

- Implementation of prescribed fire to improve watershed health
 - Project tasks may include pre-burning treatment and site preparation, but must also implement prescribed fire on the landscape
 - Projects that include only planning for prescribed fire or conduct pre-burning site treatments will not be eligible for funding
- Large-landscape planning projects for forest health which demonstrate multiple watershed and ecosystem benefits
 - These projects must complete project planning on a minimum of 10,000 acres. At the close of project planning, all environmental compliance must be complete.
- Implementation of forest health planning projects for which SNC previously funded the planning phase.
- Projects that connect and serve underserved partners
 - Strategic partners that have received no more than one SNC grant since the start of the WIP Forest Health Program (in FY 2015-2016 with funding from Proposition 1) will be eligible for grants to support planning or implementation of multi-benefit forest and watershed health projects

Additional Considerations:

- Projects must be consistent with the SNC mission and program areas as defined in the SNC Strategic Plan, meet the forest and watershed health requirements of Proposition 68, be consistent with recommendations of the 2018 California Forest Carbon Plan, and result in a clear, demonstrable, and enduring public benefit.
- Consistent with provisions of Proposition 68 and objectives of the proposed project, the SNC may give favorable consideration to projects which:
 - involve California Native American tribes
 - employ a collaborative approach in project development or implementation
 - directly benefit severely disadvantaged or disadvantaged communities
 - leverage private, federal, or local resources
 - enable the equitable geographic distribution of SNC resources

Application Process:

Projects must be developed in collaboration with SNC. [Contact your SNC Area Representative](#) to discuss project ideas. Applicants will submit a concept proposal, and then may be invited to develop a full proposal in collaboration with SNC. This grant program cycle will

repeat every quarter through March 2022, with the first expected grant award announcement in March 2021.

Please read and review the full grant program guidelines [here](#). Total estimated funding available \$3 million. The application deadline is ongoing.