

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT STATE OF CALIFORNIA

EXECUTIVE ORDER N-7-23

WHEREAS on March 1, March 8, March 12, March 14, March 28, April 20, and May 15, 2023, I proclaimed a State of Emergency to exist in 52 counties, cumulatively, as a result of a series of winter storms that initially struck California beginning in late February and continue to significantly impact the counties identified in my Proclamations; and

WHEREAS on March 31, 2023, I issued Executive Order N-6-23 to further bolster the emergency response to this Late Winter Storms event, particularly in the Tulare Lake Basin that continues to be plagued by historic flooding; and

WHEREAS on April 21, May 10, July 8, and October 19, 2021, I proclaimed States of Emergency to exist due to drought conditions; and

WHEREAS on March 10, 2023, I issued Executive Order N-4-23 to address evolving drought conditions due to the winter storms and to mitigate flooding by facilitating groundwater recharge; and

WHEREAS due to the complexity of the impacts from over a dozen Atmospheric River events since December 2022, including the accumulation of a record snowpack in the Sierra Nevada that is likely to yield record snowmelt runoff, especially in the Tulare Lake Basin, I previously issued Executive Orders identified herein to respond to and recover from the winter storms, and those orders now require updating in-light of the most recent runoff conditions and the State's more robust and recent modeling of likely flood impacts; and

WHEREAS the Tulare Lake Basin includes portions of Fresno, Kings, Tulare, and Kern counties and is the terminal point for the Kaweah, Tule, and Kern Rivers as well as a portion of the Kings River and several smaller streams, meaning that water from Sierra snowpack runoff that cannot be stored in reservoirs or absorbed into the ground will flow into the basin; and

WHEREAS the Tulare Lake Basin is hydrologically connected to the San Joaquin River Basin via the James Bypass and Fresno Slough and that connection has the potential to exacerbate the flood risk in the San Joaquin River Basin, and so further emergency response efforts may become necessary in the San Joaquin River Basin; and

WHEREAS stretches of the San Joaquin River, Chowchilla and Eastside Bypasses, San Joaquin River mainstem and tributaries (Fresno River, Chowchilla River, Merced River, Stanislaus River, and Tuolumne River, hereafter, San Joaquin River Tributaries), and Fresno Slough/James Bypass have been or are at flood stage this spring, river stages are expected to stay high or increase throughout the spring and summer as snowpack melts, and multiple levee repairs are underway on the lower San Joaquin River; and

WHEREAS the Kern River – California Aqueduct Intertie exists to move floodwaters safely from the Kern River into the California Aqueduct, and the Kern River Watermaster on May 10, 2023, requested the use of the Intertie to prevent Kern River floodwater from exacerbating flooding in the Tulare Lake Basin, and state agencies have begun actions to safely enable the diversion of these flood flows; and

WHEREAS under the provisions of Government Code section 8571, I find that strict compliance with various statutes and regulations specified in this Order would prevent, hinder, or delay the mitigation of the effects of these ongoing winter storms.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor of the State of California, in accordance with the authority vested in me by the State Constitution and statutes, and in particular, Government Code sections 8567, 8571, and 8627, do hereby issue the following Order to become effective immediately:

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

1. All provisions contained in the above-referenced Proclamations of a State of Emergency and Executive Orders shall remain in full force and effect except as modified in this Order.
2. Paragraph 2 of Executive Order N-6-23 is withdrawn and replaced by the following:

To protect health, safety, and the environment, and to reduce the risks of local catastrophic flooding in the Tulare Lake or San Joaquin River Basins, the following are suspended for activities that meet the requirements in Paragraph 3.

- a. Chapter 6 (commencing with section 1600) of Division 2 of the Fish and Game Code, and regulations adopted pursuant to that Chapter; and
 - b. Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000) of the Public Resources Code, and regulations adopted pursuant to that division.
3. Paragraph 3 of Executive Order N-6-23 is withdrawn and replaced by the following, except that any diversion in the Tulare Lake Basin that is operational as of June 1, 2023, may continue to operate under Paragraph 3 of Executive Order N-6-23 until August 31, 2023:

The suspensions created by Paragraph 2 shall apply to floodwater diversion, floating vegetation and debris removal, and levee repair and breach, in the Tulare Lake or San Joaquin River Basins, on the condition that the actions cease when the flood conditions have abated to the point there is no longer a risk of, or existing, flooding causing inundation of land, roads, or structures at or downstream of the point of diversion.

4. Additionally, the suspensions created by Paragraph 2 shall apply to floodwater diversion only if all the following additional conditions are met:
 - a. Any diversion of floodwaters directly from the (i) Tulare Lake Basin or rivers or streams or bypasses flooding the Tulare Lake Basin or (ii) the San Joaquin River or San Joaquin River tributaries (including Fresno Slough and James Bypass) or San Joaquin River bypasses must occur between March 31, 2023, and August 31, 2023, for flood management purposes.

- b. With respect to diversions of floodwaters directly from rivers or streams or bypasses, a local or regional flood control agency, city, or county has given notice via its internet website, electronic distribution list, emergency notification service, or another means of public notice, that flows downstream of the point of diversion are at imminent risk of flooding and inundation of land, roads, or structures.
- c. With respect to diversions of floodwaters that are no longer contained within a defined streambed or levee, a local or regional flood control agency, city, or county has given notice via its internet website, electronic distribution list, emergency notification service, or another means of public notice that areas from which the floodwaters are diverted are either at imminent risk of flooding or already flooded, with potential or existing inundation of land, roads, or structures, or are on lands inundated as a result of actions within subparagraph (a).
- d. Any floodwater diverted is not diverted to and will not be applied to:
 - i. Any barn, ponds, or lands to which manure or waste from an animal facility that generates waste from the feeding and housing of animals for more than 45 days per year in a confined area that is not vegetated are applied;
 - ii. Any agricultural field where pesticide or fertilizer application has occurred in the prior 30 days or in the period prohibited by applicable law, whichever is longer;
 - iii. Any area that could cause damage to critical levees, infrastructure, wastewater and drinking water systems, drinking water wells or drinking water supplies, or exacerbate the threat of flood and other health and safety concerns; or
 - iv. Any area that has not been in active irrigated agricultural cultivation within the past three years including grazing lands, annual grasslands, and natural habitats. This limitation does not apply to facilities already constructed for the purposes of groundwater recharge or managed wetlands.
- e. With respect to diversions of floodwaters from waters tributary to the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Delta as defined in Water Code section 12220 (Delta), water rights holders are not making releases of stored water or reoperating facilities to provide flow for the purposes of meeting water quality control plan or endangered species requirements in the Delta at the time of the diversion.
- f. With respect to diversions of floodwaters directly from the San Joaquin River or San Joaquin River Tributaries, the diversion uses:
 - i. either existing diversion infrastructure or temporary pumps;

- ii. no new permanent infrastructure or permanent construction; and
 - iii. simple screens installed on temporary pump intakes to minimize the impacts of diversion to salmon and other aquatic life.
5. Paragraph 4 of Executive Order N-6-23 is withdrawn and replaced by the following:

In addition to the mandatory conditions set forth in Paragraph 3, any person conducting planned levee breaches or controlled inundation to prevent further catastrophic flooding pursuant to the suspensions created by Paragraph 2 should, wherever feasible, protect above-ground infrastructure and water sources that are necessary for the protection of human health and the recovery of impacted communities.

6. Paragraph 5 of Executive Order N-6-23 is withdrawn and replaced by the following:

For purposes of conducting emergency flood preparation and response activities beyond those provided for in Paragraphs 2 and 3, for any (a) actions taken by state agencies, (b) actions taken by a local agency where the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency concurs that local action is required, and (c) permits necessary to carry out actions under (a) and (b), Public Resources Code, Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000) and regulations adopted pursuant to that Division, are suspended to the extent necessary to address flood impacts in the Tulare Lake or San Joaquin River Basins.

7. Paragraph 6 of Executive Order N-6-23 is withdrawn and replaced by the following:

To support adequate state staffing for all state agencies and departments with an assigned response and/or recovery role related to flooding in the Tulare Lake or San Joaquin River Basins, consistent with applicable federal law, work hour limitations for retired annuitants, permanent and intermittent personnel, and state management and senior supervisors are suspended. Furthermore, reinstatement and work hour limitations in Government Code sections 21220, 21224(a), and 7522.56(b), (d), (f), and (g), and the time limitations in Government Code section 19888.1 and California Code of Regulations, title 2, sections 300-303 are suspended. All other restrictions must be adhered to for retired annuitants. The Director of the California Department of Human Resources must be notified of any individual employed in state government pursuant to these suspensions. The suspension of statutes identified in this Paragraph shall also apply to local governments, as applicable, to ensure adequate staffing to appropriately respond to the flooding in the Tulare Lake Basin. Local governmental agencies shall notify the California Public Employees' Retirement System of any individual employed by an agency pursuant to this Paragraph.

8. Paragraph 6 of Executive Order N-6-23 is withdrawn and replaced by the following:

The limitation for the period of employment for State Personnel Board

emergency appointments, as provided in Government Code section 19888.1, is suspended for positions required for emergency response and/or recovery operations related to flooding in the Tulare Lake or San Joaquin River Basins. The requirements and period of employment for such appointments will be determined by the Office of Emergency Services, but shall not extend beyond the termination date of the State of Emergency.

9. Paragraph 3 of Executive Order N-4-23 is withdrawn and replaced by the following, except that any diversion that is operational as of June 1, 2023, may continue to operate under Paragraph 3 of Executive Order N-4-23 until August 31, 2023:

The suspensions created by Paragraph 2 of Executive Order N-4-23 shall apply to diversions of floodwaters as to which all the following conditions are met:

- a. Diversions of floodwaters directly from rivers, streams, or bypasses must occur between March 10, 2023, and August 31, 2023, for flood management and associated groundwater recharge.
- b. Diversions of floodwaters no longer contained within a defined streambed must prevent imminent risk of flooding or relieve flooding pressure from land, roads, or structures, already inundated, including as a result of actions within subparagraph (a).
- c. A local or regional flood control agency, city, or county has given notice via its internet website, electronic distribution list, emergency notification service, or another means of public notice, that waters at or downstream of the point of diversion are at imminent risk of flooding and inundation of land, roads, or structures.
- d. The diversions cease when the flood conditions have abated to the point there is no longer a risk of, or existing, flooding causing inundation of land, roads, or structures at or downstream of the point of diversion.
- e. Any floodwater diverted is not diverted to and will not be applied to:
 - i. Any barn, ponds, or lands, to which manure or waste from an animal facility that generates waste from the feeding and housing of animals for more than 45 days per year in a confined area that is not vegetated are applied;
 - ii. Any agricultural field where pesticides or fertilizer application has occurred in the prior 30 days or in the period prohibited by applicable law, whichever is longer;
 - iii. Any area that could cause damage to critical levees, infrastructure, wastewater and drinking water systems, drinking water wells or drinking water supplies, or exacerbate the threat of flood and other health and safety concerns; or

- iv. Any area that has not been in active irrigated agricultural cultivation within the past three years, including grazing lands, annual grasslands, and natural habitats. This limitation does not apply to facilities already constructed for the purpose of groundwater recharge or managed wetlands.
- f. With respect to diversions of floodwaters from waters tributary to the Sacramento and San Joaquin River Delta (Delta) as defined in Water Code section 12220 (Delta), water rights holders are not making releases of stored water or reoperating facilities to provide flow for the purposes of meeting water quality control plan or endangered species supporting regulatory requirements in the Delta at the time of the diversion.
- g. The diversion uses:
 - i. Either existing diversion infrastructure or temporary pumps;
 - ii. Existing groundwater recharge locations, where available;
 - iii. No new permanent infrastructure or permanent construction; and
 - iv. Simple screens installed on temporary pump intakes to minimize the impacts of diversion to salmon and other aquatic life.
- h. The person or entity availing itself of suspensions created by Paragraph 2 of Executive Order N-4-23 files a preliminary report with the Water Board and any applicable Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) or GSAs for the basin, no later than 14 days after initially commencing diversion of flood flows for groundwater recharge, and a final report with the Water Board and any applicable GSA or GSAs for the basin no later than September 15, 2023. The preliminary and final reports required by this subparagraph shall:
 - i. Identify the person or entity utilizing the suspensions created by Paragraph 2 of Executive Order N-4-23;
 - ii. Identify the triggering condition from subparagraph (c) of this paragraph;
 - iii. Provide the GPS coordinates for the point of diversion, a map identifying the approximate area inundated by the flood flows, and the corresponding assessor parcel number(s);
 - iv. Identify the time when diversions of floodwaters to groundwater recharge commenced, and for final reports, when diversions ceased; and
 - v. Provide an estimate, as of the report's date, of the amount of floodwaters diverted utilizing the suspensions created by Paragraph 2 of Executive Order N-4-23.

The Water Board shall post on its internet website all reports received pursuant to this subparagraph.

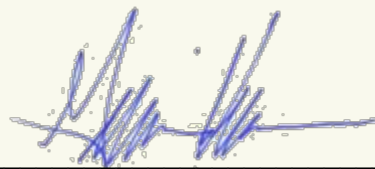
10. To mitigate the effects of the Late Winter Storms, including by reducing the risks of local catastrophic flooding in the Tulare Lake Basin, Part 2 (commencing with section 1200) of division 2 of the Water Code, exclusive of section 1225, and regulations adopted pursuant to that part, are suspended for diversions of flood flows into the Kern Intertie and ultimately into the California Aqueduct until August 31, 2023, such that applications and permits for water rights shall not be required for such diversions, nor shall such diversions create new water rights or modify existing water rights, to the extent applications or permits would have been required or water rights would have been affected absent this suspension.

11. The Department of Water Resources and State Water Resources Control Board shall (i) communicate to water systems and others any additional information or actions necessary for those systems and others to monitor and be prepared for the addition of Kern River floodwater in the California Aqueduct, and (ii) collaborate on long-term actions that align water rights and flood response, including actions that maximize in-basin groundwater recharge.

I FURTHER DIRECT that as soon as hereafter possible, this Order be filed in the Office of the Secretary of State and that widespread publicity and notice be given of this Order.

This Order is not intended to, and does not, create any rights or benefits, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity, against the State of California, its agencies, departments, entities, officers, employees, or any other person.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this 17th day of May 2023.



GAVIN NEWSOM
Governor of California

ATTEST:

SHIRLEY WEBER, PH.D
Secretary of State