

DAMAGE SURVEY SUMMARY REPORT

DISASTER CA25-8

AUGUST 2025 GIFFORD FIRES

SAN LUIS OBISPO AND SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

COMMENCING AUGUST 1, 2025

Prepared by:
California Department of Transportation
Division of Budgets
Federal Resources Office

Introduction

This Damage Survey Summary Report (DSSR) has been prepared for submission to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in response to Gifford fire event impacting San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties, which began on August 1, 2025. According to FHWA’s Emergency Relief Manual (May 2013), the purpose of this DSSR is to “summarize the damage assessment and provide information and documentation for the FHWA Division Administrator to make a finding that a natural disaster or catastrophic failure has occurred within the intent of 23 U.S.C. 125.” The DSSR also “provides the Division Administrator with a basis to make a finding that the disaster is eligible for funding under the FHWA ER program.”

Damage Description

Beginning on August 1, 2025, the Gifford Fire began burning, expanded rapidly due to hot, dry fuels, high winds and low humidity impacting San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties. The fire has caused extensive damage to highways, critical infrastructure, and roadside facilities, including destroyed down drains and debris accumulation in catchments, inlets, and ditch lines.

On December 23, 2025, Governor Gavin Newsom proclaimed a State of Emergency for the Gifford Fire events impacting San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties. This Damage Survey Summary Report includes copies of the Governor’s State of Emergency Proclamation.

Damage Estimate

To date, the estimated cost to repair or reconstruct the damage to federal-aid highways in accordance with the provisions of 23 U.S.C. 125 is \$6.6 million for State facilities and currently, no damages have been reported by the Local agencies, subject to increase.

Additional Information

The following attached information describes the statewide wildfire damage in additional detail:

- Governor’s Proclamation (Gifford Fire - executed on December 23, 2025)
- State damage estimates (to date)
- Sampling of news articles
- Photos of reported damage

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MAP OF
SAN LUIS OBISPO AND SANTA BARBARA
2004/05 SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA STORMS
COUNTY
COST AND LOCATIONS
OF
EMERGENCY CONTRACTS

GOVERNOR'S PROCLAMATION

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

FILED
in the office of the Secretary of State
of the State of California

DEC 30 2025


Deputy Secretary of State

PROCLAMATION OF A STATE OF EMERGENCY

WHEREAS on August 1, 2025, the Gifford Fire Ignited in San Luis Obispo County and rapidly spread into Santa Barbara County, burning over 131,000 acres, and not reaching 100 percent containment until September 28, 2025, and

WHEREAS the Gifford Fire expanded rapidly, fueled by hot, dry, and windy conditions, resulting in the closure of Highway 166 for more than two weeks; and

WHEREAS on August 7, 2025, San Luis Obispo County proclaimed a local emergency due to the Gifford Fire; and

WHEREAS the Gifford Fire caused significant damage to highways and infrastructure, including destroyed downdrains and debris accumulation in catchments, inlets, and ditch lines; and

WHEREAS under the provisions of Government Code section 8558(b), I find that conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property existed due to impacts from the Gifford Fire in San Luis Obispo County and Santa Barbara County; and

WHEREAS under the provisions of Government Code section 8558(b), I find that the conditions caused by the Gifford Fire, by reason of their magnitude, are beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment, and facilities of any single local government and require the combined forces of a mutual aid region or regions to appropriately respond; and

WHEREAS under the provisions of Government Code section 8625(c), I find that local authorities are inadequate to cope with the magnitude of the damage caused by the Gifford Fire; and

WHEREAS under the provisions of Government Code section 8571, I find that strict compliance with various statutes and regulations specified in this Proclamation would prevent, hinder, or delay the mitigation of the effects of the Gifford Fire.

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, including the California Emergency Services Act, and in particular, Government Code section 8625, **HEREBY PROCLAIM A STATE OF EMERGENCY** to exist in San Luis Obispo County and Santa Barbara County due to the Gifford Fire.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

1. All agencies of the state government utilize and employ state personnel, equipment, and facilities for the performance of any and all activities consistent with the direction of the Office of Emergency Services and the State Emergency Plan. Also, all residents are to obey the direction of emergency officials with regard to this emergency in order to protect their safety.

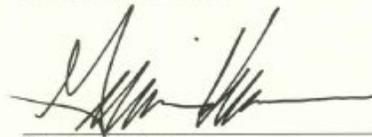


2. The restrictions set forth in Penal Code section 396, which are automatically triggered upon proclamation of a state of emergency, are suspended, and no such restrictions are imposed, with respect to the Gifford Fire.
3. The California Department of Transportation shall formally request immediate assistance through the Federal Highway Administration's Emergency Relief Program, United States Code, Title 23, section 125, in order to obtain federal assistance for highway repairs or reconstruction.

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

This Proclamation 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 23rd day of December 2025.



GAVIN NEWSOM
Governor of California

ATTEST:



SHIRLEY N. WEBER, Ph.D.
Secretary of State



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SAN LUIS OBISPO AND SANTA BARBARA
COUNTY

STATE
DAMAGE ESTIMATE

2025 Wildfires						Caltrans Preliminary Major Damage Assessment REPORT (PMDAR)								FHWA ER	
Count	District	Date of Incident	Event Name	DO (Y/N)	EA #	Main Damages	Work Description	County	Route	Begin PM	End PM	ER Potential Eligibility?	Cost Estimate		
2	5	8/1/2025	Gifford Fire	Y	05-1s930	Drainage systems, guardrail, burnt debris, slopes	Assess rockfall, place temporary railing, repair/replace guardrail, replace/repair roadway signs, embankment slough mitigation, replace burnt downdrains, clear fire debris from catchments/inlets/ditch lines, and perform temporary traffic control	SLO/SB	166	21	49	YES?	\$6,600,000		
TOTAL												\$	6,600,000		

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SAMPLING OF NEWS ARTICLES

Gifford Fire burns 83,000 acres, now the largest blaze in California this year

Evacuation orders remain in place as the Gifford Fire burns for its fifth day.

By [Megan Forrester](#)

August 6, 2025, 12:17 PM



Wildfires rage in the west as smoke triggers ground stop at airport Millions from the Great Lakes to the Northeast are under air quality alerts with the toxic smoke prompting a ground delay at Boston's Logan airport.

David Swanson/Reuters

The Gifford Fire, a wildfire burning in Central California that has destroyed over 83,000 acres in six days, continues to rage and is now the largest blaze in the state this year, according to Cal Fire.

Since it started on Friday afternoon, the Gifford Fire -- which is situated within the Los Padres National Forest -- has burned 83,933 acres and has only reached 9% containment, prompting evacuation orders for those in the Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties, officials said.

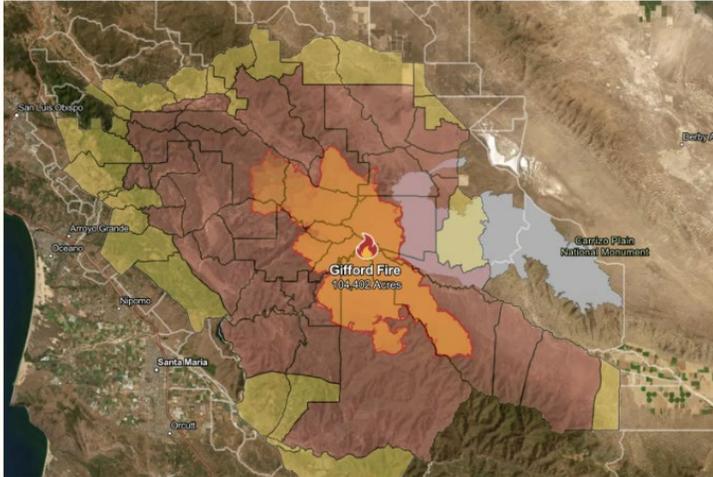
While the flames have been centered around thick brush and rugged terrain, officials said over 1,000 structures are threatened by this wildfire.

Gifford Fire Map, Update as California Blaze Hits Major Milestone

PUBLISHED

AUG 09, 2025 AT 10:25 AM EDT

The Gifford fire in central California has burned more than 100,000 acres as of Friday, becoming the state's largest blaze of the year so far.



The fire is threatening thousands of homes and other structures near the Los Padres National Forest and has prompted widespread evacuation orders in the Golden State. The Gifford fire, which broke out on August 1 along Highway 166, has burned more than 104,000 acres of San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties, according to CAL FIRE. It was 21 percent contained as of Friday evening.



A firefighter watches as the Gifford Fire burns on August 6, 2025 in Los Padres National Forest, California. | *Eric Thayer /Getty Images*

The fire "is burning actively on both sides of the highway with more active spread on the south side," CAL FIRE said in a situation summary on Friday. At least 3,600 personnel are battling the blaze.

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COUNTY

PHOTOGRAPHS

Gifford Fire



05-SLO-Typical Wildfire Damage

Gifford Fire



05-SLO-Typical Wildfire Damage