

CA Fire Services Task Force on Climate Impacts

Meeting Minutes - **CONFIDENTIAL**

July 13, 2015

Present: Mark Ghilarducci (Chair, Cal OES), Ken Alex (OPR), MG David Baldwin (CANG), Danjel Bout (Cal OES), Wade Crowfoot (CA Governor's Office), Bill Croyle (DWR), Tina Curry (Cal OES), Ralph Domanski (Cal OES), Jose Dominguez (?), Mike Esparza (CSFA), Lorenzo Gigliotti (Cal OES), Tracey Hansen (CalChiefs), Mark Hartwig (CalChiefs Metro), Jeff Kens (CANG), Jose Lara (Cal OES), Shawna Legarza (USFS), Todd Lewis (CANG), Mike Lopez (CAL FIRE), Jeff Lusk (FEMA RIX), Trudie Mahoney (USDA-Forest Service), Sam Marouk (BLM), Karen McCreedy (Cal OES), Daryl Osby (FIREScope), Lou Paulson (CPF), Ron Phillips (City of Folsom), Ken Pimlott (CAL FIRE), Dave Roberts (El Dorado Hills FD), Dave Rocha (Alameda Co. FD), Patricia Sutch (Western States Seismic Policy Council), Jaret Upton (CAL FIRE), Megan Walton (Cal OES), Jason Weber (Marin Co. FD), Robin Wills (CSFA), Brian Woodbeck (Cal OES), Kim Zagaris (Cal OES)

Phone: Richard Pearce (FDAC), Jeff Bowman (Orange Co. Fire Authority)

I. Welcome & Introductions (Mark Ghilarducci/Chair, Cal OES)

Overview, Charter of Task Force, and current California drought update

How can we get the public involved when it comes to climate impacts and fire management? We want to work to frame the overall California (CA) approach on climate and adaptation. Though CA has the most comprehensive climate policy in the country, the efforts for adaptation are behind. This is a TEAM issue versus a problem just one agency has to tackle. This Task Force is an extension of the Blue Ribbon Fire Commission efforts.

Please review draft Task Force charter and get any comments back to Tina Curry (Christina.curry@caloes.ca.gov) as soon as possible.

- *Drought update (Bill Croyle, DWR)*

DWR is monitoring 156 reservoirs – many are below 50% of slurry capacity to date. Low snowpack = low runoff. We have about 2,000 dry wells in the state, which are impacting water allocation. We are also seeing record low levels in reservoirs, snowpack, snowmelt rate, which is causing quite a stress on the state's overall water supply system. The snow period is shorter due to climate change, thought it could also cause more extreme periods of flood flow, particularly over burn areas – which will impact downstream communities. We're planning for extremes – whether they're more wet or more dry. Temperature increases are also having an impact. We're in a strong El Nino at the moment, though it's not guaranteed that the system will produce rain. 1/3 of the time it's a wet El Nino, and 2/3 of the time it's a dry El Nino system. Wet weather, if it occurs, is more likely to affect southern CA. As we approach flood season (October – April), we'll know more information about just what this year's El Nino will bring.

Wade Crowfoot – in line with drought response efforts, we're also seeing and dealing with a lot of environmental impacts of drought and climate change, and we're tracking human, economic, and environmental impacts of the drought.

II. Overview of Climate Change Impacts – Framing the Threat

a. *Climate Adaptation in CA – State Strategy and Executive Order B-30-15 (Ken Alex, OPR)*

Applauds having this meeting, especially having local, state, and federal partners together. We have a comprehensive climate policy with three elements:

- 1) Reducing greenhouse gas emissions,
- 2) Preparing for climate impacts (which are inevitable) – this includes Safeguarding CA (overall plan for building resilience in CA for climate change), and
- 3) Supporting research on climate change (Fourth Assessment report) to inform policy.

Executive Order (EO) B-30-15 sets a set of comprehensive steps for reducing greenhouse gas emissions (40% below 1990 levels by 2030 and 80% under 1990 levels by 2050) and supports advancing CA's work on reducing impacts of climate change. We're trying to get us back to under the 1990 levels of emissions. The EO lays out a series of steps to handle the inevitable impacts and acceleration of some of those impacts, building on the state adaptation work to date. Recommends that the group look at Safeguarding CA information if they have not already seen it: (<http://resources.ca.gov/climate/safeguarding/>). As part of that effort, we are identifying risk by sector and by region, and identifying lead and support state agencies to lead efforts on those sectors. Sector leads are putting together an implementation plan, and we'll be reporting back next year on those plans to check on the progress we've made. (Listed the components of EO B-30-15, found here: <http://gov.ca.gov/news.php?id=18938>). The EO also lists a multi-sector approach to climate adaptation, consisting of four key elements state government needs to take action on:

- 1) Incorporate climate change impacts into the state's Five-Year Infrastructure Plan (the plan will take current and future climate change impacts into account in all infrastructure projects);
- 2) Update the Safeguarding California Plan - the state climate adaptation strategy - to identify how climate change will affect California infrastructure and industry and what actions the state can take to reduce the risks posed by climate change. Updates will be made every three years, and sectors are in the process of developing implementation plans (due September 2015);
- 3) Factor climate change into state agency planning and investment decisions; and
- 4) Implement measures under existing agency and departmental authority to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (OPR will set up a Technical Advisory Group)

Priorities should be given to actions that encourage climate preparedness and reduce greenhouse gases. Actions should protect the state's most vulnerable populations. CA applied for the National Disaster Resilience competition. We're seeking \$100 million+ under this effort to develop a replicable model linking forest health and economic development. Will inform broader watershed efforts and housing and community development, and are working with multiple state agencies on the effort.

Under the law, funding must be used to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Cannot use the funds for adaptation and resilience unless it is tied to reducing greenhouse gases. Ultimate goals are to:

- Build climate preparedness
- Identify flexible and adaptive approaches
- Protect the state's most vulnerable populations
- Map solutions

(Also mentioned the Alliance of Regional Collaboratives for Climate Adaptation-ARCCA, as well as information on CivicSpark.)

b. Growing California Wildfire Risk (Ken Pimlott, CAL FIRE)

Cal FIRE state responsibility areas (SRAs) in CA total over 31 million acres – including wildlands in the state's trust. There are a very diverse set of ownerships and management in those acres. We're seeing a mean temperature change throughout the state. We're also seeing vegetation climate moving north – conifer trees are moving north...we're not seeing conifer/forest trees come in and replace what's been burned (from the Rim fire, etc). As temperatures and climatic conditions change, we need to look at more resilient species for those areas. There are epidemic levels of forest pests and diseases also occurring, as well as accelerated erosion after fires and resistance to water penetration. We are not seeing seed germination to replenish what's been burnt to support revegetation. Other impacts include changing climate conditions, drought, frequent/more intense wildfires, epidemic levels of forest pests and diseases, and threats to co-benefits like clean air, clean water, and climate mitigation. We're looking at a 78-day increase to the fire season around the western states (not just CA).

Wildfire stats so far for 2015 – January 1 through July 4 = 3,381 fires for 15,000+ acres (2014 was 2,491 fires for 35,000+ acres)

Epidemic levels of forest pests include bark beetle, sudden oak death, stress of microclimates, etc. Will need to find more ways to become resilient and work to mitigate impacts. (Showed examples of Cambria forest and the 2015 pest epidemic)

The 2015 Strategic Fire Plan took a dynamic approach to looking at the wildfire problem in CA, and supports three key planning areas:

- 1) Response (interagency agreements, operating plans, mutual aid system...\$100m additional funding each year for 2014 and 2015...early start up and year round staffing, additional personnel and resources, state drought augmentation, etc.);
- 2) Prevention and education (forest management and hazardous fuels reduction, vegetation management program, public information/education); and
- 3) Planning (land use planning, reducing emissions...tied to cap and trade and greenhouse gas reduction, WUI building standards, community wildfire protection plans, FIREWISE communities, local unit fire plans, etc).

We need to manage fuel now to help protect the forests from large fires such as the Rim fire. Reducing emissions is tied to greenhouse gas reductions in cap and trade - there are many benefits

of cap and trade...reducing emissions...protecting the environment...etc. The challenge is avoiding wildfire emissions by forest management NOW, and identifying metrics to articulate carbon sequestration/storage long term.

CAL FIRE's funding comes mostly from general fund. Management is key – we have to do more. Mentioned the "Fire Adapted 50" project – CAL FIRE met up with stakeholders to plug resources into a larger area.

Mark Ghilarducci – some of the efforts being discussed here should be incorporated into Local Hazard Mitigation Plans (LHMPs) and, by proxy, into the State Hazard Mitigation Plan (SHMP).

c. State Hazard Mitigation Plan (Tina Curry, Cal OES)

Adding climate adaptation into planning efforts, as well as ideas to reduce risk. It is a requirement in CA for locals to have a mitigation plan in order to request and receive federal disaster money. Local Hazard Mitigation Plans (LHMPs) and the State Hazard Mitigation Plan (SHMP) are now updated at least every five years. LHMPs are noted in the General Plan's Safety Element (AB 2140). The last version of the SHMP (2013) has a significant section for climate change. Recommend group becoming familiar with SHMP (<http://www.caloes.ca.gov/cal-oes-divisions/hazard-mitigation/hazard-mitigation-planning/state-hazard-mitigation-plan>). Also recommend group review Adaptation Planning Guide (APG) for more information (handout in participant meeting folder). We're looking to assist local government with adapting to effects from climate change by helping to identify their regional risk so they can start adapting to and helping to mitigate those risks.

We receive grants from FEMA for hazard mitigation planning. The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) is post disaster (after a major disaster declaration, ie. Napa earthquake), and we can request that money and invest it in actions that help mitigate impacts of future events. The Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) is an annual competitive fund – 75/25 cost share (75% FEMA, 25% locals), and cost benefit needs to be shown.

CA participated in the federal Task Force for climate preparedness topics, and its recommendations to federal government included disaster response and recovery solutions. One of the outcomes of the President's state, local, and tribal leaders Task Force on climate preparedness and resilience included the proposed FEMA Flood Risk Management Standards.

There have been changes to the FEMA mitigation requirements – a climate component is now required in SHMPs starting in 2016.

Safeguarding CA is the state's climate adaptation strategy. Cal OES staff are actively involved in developing the action/implementation plan for emergency management. This Fire Task Force will be listed as an action we are undertaking related to incorporating climate change into emergency management.

What is it we can require of local governments in order to leverage these programs and help us achieve the objectives we want to meet as part of this forum?

d. Growing Western States Wildfire Risk (Shawna Legarza, USFS)

Where is the wildfire risk potential at? There has been an increase in fire activity and larger fires across the west, even up in Canada. The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy is a strategic push to work collaboratively among all stakeholders and across all landscapes using best science to make meaningful progress. The Strategy has three goals:

- 1) Resilient landscapes
- 2) Fire adapted communities
- 3) Wildfire response

Referred to handouts (color copies) that show the communication, collaboration, and coordination occurring throughout the state. Mentioned FIREWATCH program and the two helicopters now available to map real time fire data. Showed the 7 day significant fire potential outlook (found on USFS website: <http://psgeodata.fs.fed.us/7day/action/forecast/8>). USFS/Pacific Southwest Region (PSW) Wildland Capacity – using helicopters and drones to watch fires.

III. Expectations and Considerations

a. Use of Firefighting Resources and Operational Readiness

- *Local/State Mutual Aid (Kim Zagaris)*

What's nice about the FIRESCOPE process is that it works from the bottom up, much like the Incident Command System (ICS). FIRESCOPE is leveraging technology – SMART devices, FOG e-book, social media, etc. Talked about intrastate mutual aid compacts, the Emergency Management Agency Compact (EMAC, interstate mutual aid), Cal OES Fire and Rescue programs, Fire and Rescue Service Advisory Committee FIRESCOPE Board of Directors, the Interstate Civil Defense and Disaster Compact, etc. CA has two primary mutual aid agreements – Master Mutual Aid Agreement (MMAA) and the CA Fire Assistance Agreement (CFAA). In 2007, we moved over 600 local government engines around the country to support fire response. During incident response, we mission task state agencies such as the California National Guard (CANG), CAL FIRE, etc. These agencies play a significant role in fire response. Discussed State Fire and Rescue Resource Mutual Aid Guidelines (letter 11-1-10). Also mentioned the CA Wildfire Coordinating Group (CWCG).

We are now preparing for fire season year-round.

- CA National Guard/State Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA, MG Dave Baldwin, CANG)

Resources are in action for firefight this year – we have a sustained commitment/surge commitment, of helicopters...12-14 type 1 helicopters. We have been reaching out across the rest of the nation in case we need to use EMAC for additional resources. Also working with USMC in southern CA for more resources. New resource available = chinook helicopters, looking to get approval for CAL FIRE radios to be added to the new helicopters (expected mid-October 2015 to do this). Can team these new helicopters with the old ones (already equipped with CAL FIRE radios) for response. Reconnaissance wing being converted to attack wing. Search and rescue authority has been delegated below the Secretary of the Navy (SecNav) in case we need to use that resource. Army National Guard has small shadow unmanned aircraft available to assist with imagery during fires (can convert raw data into something that can be used for decision-making). Can offer around 10,000 people as resources, if needed, for fires to support Cal FIRE and other agencies.

- Funding Challenges and Other Obstacles (Mark Ghilarducci, Cal OES)

What kinds of concerns do local fire agencies have? MG Baldwin – it would be helpful to start planning for flood response, as that may be what causes us to get out of this drought. CA has the second highest threat of flooding in terms of risk.

IV. Next Steps

- a. Meeting Summary/Schedule/Agenda Items

A quick summary of the meeting was performed before moving to open discussion questions.

Open Discussion

Q: From local fire perspective, what are you seeing or what are your concerns as we move forward?

A: Would be useful to start planning for flood response operations since we have fire response “down”. Recommended to start looking at that for future meetings

Q: Is this a standing Task Force? What are your (Cal OES/Chair) outcomes, goals, and/or key objectives of the Task Force?

A: Discussion ensued regarding the draft charter for the Task Force (handout in packet). It is anticipated that this Task Force will be around for awhile, as fire is a year round hazard. Task Force may change a bit as we get into other areas of concern/hazards. Charter needs to be reviewed and feedback provided back to Tina Curry (Cal OES). Task Force meetings are anticipated to occur quarterly, at least for the first year or so. There may also be subcommittees set up.

How can fire service be a conduit between state and local communities with regards to adapting to climate change?

What is FEMA doing for climate change (current activities/laws, how funding is tied to mitigation process, FMAGs, etc.)?

Next Steps/Action Items/Personnel Responsible

- Draft meeting minutes will be sent out to Task Force members for approval – Cal OES
- Date and location for next meeting will be determined and members notified – Cal OES
- ALL – review draft Task Force charter and provide feedback back to Tina Curry (Christina.curry@caloes.ca.gov) as soon as possible.
- Facilitate a conference call with members at least a month before each meeting to gather items for the next meeting’s agenda – Cal OES

PARKING LOT/FUTURE AGENDA IDEAS

- California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA) and Fire Management Assistance Grants (FMAG)
- Planning for flood response operations
- FEMA speaker to discuss FEMA's current climate activities
- Setting up subcommittees for this Task Force

Adjourn

Please note that these minutes are a summary of the meeting. Updates will be made to the minutes upon receipt of recommendations from parties present at each meeting. Approval of the minutes will be determined by consensus of those Task Force members present at the subsequent Task Force meeting.

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