



GAVIN NEWSOM

GOVERNOR OF CALIFORNIA

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Ahead of Peak Fire Season, Governor Newsom Announces Surge in Firefighting Support

\$80.74 million in emergency funds to accelerate action on emerging fire season dangers

Early action aligned with Governor's recently published Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan

SACRAMENTO – Following last year's record-breaking fire season, Governor Gavin Newsom today announced emergency early action to boost firefighting support as California faces another difficult wildfire year. Using Emergency Fund authorization, Governor Newsom has approved \$80.74 million for 1,399 additional firefighters with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) to bolster fuels management and wildfire response efforts. The Governor's January 2021 budget proposes \$1 billion to support wildfire and forest management.

"In California, climate change is making the hots hotter and the dries drier, leaving us with world record-breaking temperatures and devastating wildfires threatening our communities," said Governor Newsom. "We aren't just waiting for the next crisis to hit – this funding will support our heroic firefighters to save lives as they work to prevent and tackle destructive wildfires."

With much of the state experiencing persistent drought conditions, low reservoir storage and below average snowpack, California is planning for another dry year. Meanwhile, scattered light precipitation has assisted in new growth in annual grasses that will serve as fuel for wildfires.

This Emergency Fund authorization includes a surge of 1,256 seasonal firefighters for maximum flexibility through June 30, 2021. This funding will provide fire crew and fire engine staffing, augments eight currently understaffed existing fire crews ahead of the summer, and allows the early hiring and training of fire crews for fuels management to provide twelve new CAL FIRE crews, and six seasonal and six new permanent Conservation Corps crews.

Further, the state will onboard 24 seasonal firefighters for California National Guard hand crews who support CAL FIRE's fuels management work.

The funding will also provide 119 firefighters to staff CAL FIRE helitack crews earlier in the year, to allow them time to train and be operationally ready by May 2021. This includes the orientation and operations of the new S-70i helicopter to operate from four CAL FIRE helitack bases. Improved technology to support incident base camp operations, including website traffic management, will improve transparency and accuracy of information for the public.

The Governor's January 2021 budget proposes \$1 billion to support California's [Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan](#), which sets forth a strategy to increase the pace and scale of forest and wildland management to meet the state's target of completing projects on 500,000 acres annually by 2025 and expanding the use of prescribed fire. The plan calls for achieving these goals largely through regional strategies tailored to the environmental conditions, risks and priorities in each area.

The plan also centers on building fuel breaks around vulnerable communities, expanding home hardening, defensible space and preparedness planning to create wildfire-adapted communities, and sustaining the economic vitality of rural forested areas.

Building on significant investments in the state's firefighting capabilities, the Governor's budget also proposes \$143 million General Fund to support 30 new fire crews, and also includes \$48 million to continue phasing in the S-70i helicopters and large air tankers.

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