

**EXECUTIVE ORDER OF THE HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
DECLARING A STATE OF LOCAL EMERGENCY AND BANNING OUTDOOR
BURNING IN RESPONSE TO COUNTYWIDE DROUGHT CONDITIONS**

WHEREAS, the State of Florida and Hillsborough County are experiencing drought-like conditions and higher than normal temperatures; and

WHEREAS, the Keetch-Byram Drought Index, a soil moisture measurement in which a measurement of 400 denotes a significant danger of fire, and Hillsborough County currently measured at 551 and has remained above 500 for the month of April, with drought conditions expected to remain high to very high for the month of May; and

WHEREAS, the Florida Forest Service Readiness Level for Hillsborough County is at level 3 (High) on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most dangerous level; and

WHEREAS, the environmental and weather conditions in the State of Florida and Hillsborough County present a heightened danger from fire; and

WHEREAS, since the beginning of January, 497 forest and brush fires throughout the State have burned over 60,906 acres, with several fires continuing to burn; and

WHEREAS, Hillsborough County must take timely emergency measures because of the potential for injury or damage to life and property within the county, from the heightened threat of fire; and

WHEREAS, Hillsborough County Fire Rescue has indicated that in light of the drought conditions existing in Hillsborough County, the act of outdoor burning poses a risk to the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of the county; and

WHEREAS, the fertile conditions for forest and brush fires create an emergency condition that necessitates the immediate enactment of a local state of emergency; and

WHEREAS, other measures may have to be taken in order to mitigate the potential for causing further threatening conditions and/or extensive damage to public utilities, public buildings, public communications, public streets and roads, public drainage systems, as well as privately owned property; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 252, Florida Statutes, and Hillsborough County Ordinance 06-13 (Hillsborough County Code of Laws and Ordinances, Part A, Chapter 22, Article II, Sections 22-19 through 22-30), authorizes Hillsborough County to declare a state of local emergency; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 22, Article II, Section 22-21, Hillsborough County Code of Ordinances and Laws, empowers the Board, Board Chair, or County Administrator, as designee, to declare that a local state of emergency exists; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 22, Article II, Section 22-22, Hillsborough County Code of Ordinances and Laws, provides that a state of emergency shall be limited to seven days, but may be extended, as necessary, in seven-day increments; and

WHEREAS, in light of the current dry weather conditions, it is prudent to have a local emergency declaration in place and to authorize the prohibition of open burning in Hillsborough County upon the County Administrator signing this Order.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR THIS 25th DAY OF APRIL 2025, THAT:

1. The said drought and heightened fire hazard conditions pose a serious threat to the health, safety, and welfare of the people and property of Hillsborough County, Florida, and that a state of local emergency is hereby, declared, effective immediately for the incorporated and unincorporated areas of Hillsborough County.
2. The County Administrator, in consultation with the Fire Chief, and the Director of Emergency Management, is authorized to take whatever action is deemed necessary and appropriate to protect, inform, and educate the public from the threat of wildfires.
3. Except for burning specifically authorized by the Florida Forest Service (FFS), all outdoor burning is hereby prohibited. The unpermitted outside igniting of flammable or combustible material, including fireworks and sparklers, is prohibited. Outside grilling is permissible only if a barbecue grill is used and is constantly attended. Any authorized outdoor burning approved by FFS shall be conducted in strict compliance with the state statutes, agency rules, or any other written conditions. Any person conducting outdoor burning authorized by FFS must contact the Emergency Dispatch Center (EDC) by phone no later than 8 a.m. on the day of the burn, to notify them of the authorization.
4. The County Administrator, in consultation with the Fire Chief and the Director of Emergency Management, is authorized to direct evacuations of any areas imminently threatened by wildfires.
5. This Executive Order supersedes and controls over any County ordinance, rule, or policy that may be in conflict with this Order.
6. This Executive Order take effect immediately upon adoption and shall remain in effect for seven days unless extended or rescinded by the Board, Board Chair or County Administrator.

7. As provided by Section 252.50, Florida Statutes, any person who violates this order is guilty of a second-degree misdemeanor, punishable in accordance with Sections 775.082 and 775.083, Florida Statutes.

Executed this 25th day of April 2025.

Bonnie M. Wise

**Bonnie M. Wise, County Administrator
Hillsborough County**

APPROVED BY COUNTY ATTORNEY

Approved as to Form and Legal Sufficiency

By: *Jennifer Mott*
Assistant County Attorney

**STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF HILLSBOROUGH**

I, VICTOR D. CRIST, Clerk of the Circuit Court and Ex Officio Clerk of the Board of the County Commissioners, do hereby certify that the above and foregoing Order is a true and correct copy of an Order executed by the County Administrator on April 25, 2025.

WITNESS my hand and official seal this 25th day of April 2025.

**VICTOR D. CRIST
Clerk of Circuit Court**

By: *[Signature]*
Deputy Clerk

