

PROCLAMATION OF LOCAL HEALTH EMERGENCY
REGARDING FLOODWATER CONTAMINATION IN THE COUNTY OF TULARE

WHEREAS, California Health and Safety Code, Division 101, Part 3, Chapter 2, Article 2, Sections 101075 through 101095 confer upon Local Health Officers of the political subdivisions of the State of California, emergency powers necessary to protect public health and safety; and

WHEREAS, California Health and Safety Code section 101080 and Tulare County Ordinance Code section 1-15-1033 authorize the local health officer to declare of local health emergency in the health officer's jurisdiction, or any part thereof, whenever the health officer reasonably determines that there is an imminent and proximate threat of the introduction of an contagious, infectious, or communicable disease, chemical agent, noncommunicable biologic agent, toxin, or radioactive agent; and

WHEREAS, the Health Officer of the County of Tulare makes the following findings:

Conditions of certain hazardous waste in Tulare County in the form of detritus resulting from flooding, which began on or about March 9, 2023, and which involved destruction and/or significant damage to a number of structures and open areas and poses a substantial present or potential hazard to human health and the environment unless immediately addressed and managed; and

There is an imminent and proximate threat of infectious or communicable diseases and/or non-communicable biologic agents due to, standing and/or stagnant water, mold, exposure to agricultural components, and accumulations of perishable foods and other organic materials that normally require refrigeration but have been left to spoil due to lack of electricity, as well as potential contamination or destruction of residential and/or commercial water supplies in the flooded area; and

There exists floodwater contaminated with sewage, human and livestock waste, household, medical and industrial hazardous waste that can contain carcinogenic compounds, other contaminants that can lead to illness (such as wound infections, skin rash, gastrointestinal illness, tetanus).

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2023, the County of Tulare's Emergency Services Director proclaimed a local emergency due to flooding in the County; and

WHEREAS, the Health Officer of the County of Tulare does hereby find that there is an imminent and proximate threat to public health from floodwater contamination in Tulare County; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors is not in session, and cannot immediately be called into session; and

NOW, THEREFORE, the Health Officer of the County of Tulare hereby proclaims and declares that a local health emergency now exists in the County of Tulare due to the presence of and threat posed by floodwater contamination hazardous waste in the form of detritus, standing and/or stagnant water, mold, exposure to agricultural components from the recent floods and the contamination of food and the residential and commercial water supply.

Date: March 11, 2023

Time: 6:00 PM

Issued by:

Karen Haught

Karen Haught, M.D.
County Health Officer
County of Tulare
Health and Human Services
Public Health Branch