



**2008-09 MAY REVISE**

## **STRENGTHENING DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE**

*GOVERNOR'S EMERGENCY RESPONSE INITIATIVE PROTECTS PEOPLE, PROPERTY STATEWIDE*

*California's communities constantly face a potentially devastating range of emergencies and natural disasters, including flooding, extreme temperatures, wildfires, mudslides, drought, and earthquakes. The state has a responsibility to aggressively prepare for the next, inevitable emergency or natural disaster. The Emergency Response Initiative will ensure California is prepared by providing first responders with new equipment and technology, improving overall emergency preparedness and response, and proactively helping to save lives and property. This proposal, which has been improved upon since the January budget proposal, will benefit all Californians – north, south, coastal, inland, rural, or urban.*

**This initiative provides California's emergency responders with the resources they need to save lives and property.** For the 2008-09 budget year, this initiative will:

- Fund full peak-season staffing of 336 fire engines with 1,100 seasonal firefighters.
- Ensure that OES continues to have the ability to respond to disasters and utilize its Warning Center to notify emergency first responders.

**The May Revise updates and improves the Governor's January proposal.** While all Californians will benefit from this initiative, the updated proposal recognizes that there are varying levels of risk depending on where Californians live. Thus, the surcharge on all residential and commercial property insurance statewide will be designated by zip code and set at two levels based on differing risk:

- 1.40 percent on those structures in areas designated as high-hazard zones in terms of earthquake, fire, or flood, as determined by OES and CAL FIRE risk maps
  - This will result in an average cost of about \$12.60 per household
- 0.75 percent on those structures in low-hazard zones.
  - This will result in an average cost of about \$6.75 per household

**This initiative ensures California is prepared for future emergencies and disasters and funds key recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Commission Task Force.** The emergency Response Initiative will:

- Provide 131 new engines to local firefighters. This initiative adds 131 Office of Emergency Services fire engines on loan to local firefighters, increasing the total available from 119 to 250 over five years.
- Add new helicopters that perform better for less. Aerial assets add an important layer of defense against destruction caused by natural disasters. Under the Governor's proposal, 11 new all-weather, 24-hour-capable helicopters will be purchased and six of nine helitack bases will be remodeled.
- Strengthen the California National Guard's response. Under this proposal, the state will provide the National Guard with two full-time helicopter crews; two firefighting systems for the C-130 cargo aircraft, and three helicopter firefighting systems. This will result in even quicker responses.
- Track and coordinate equipment with Global Positioning System (GPS) technology. Multi-incident disasters demand that responders track and deploy equipment as quickly as possible. The Governor proposes that CAL FIRE outfit key pieces of equipment with GPS to allow the monitoring of equipment use in real time and the quick dispatch of equipment to where it's needed most.

**This initiative improves emergency preparedness and response – across the entire state.** Every community from the coast to the mountains stands to benefit from this initiative.

- This initiative will improve statewide response to all disasters. In addition to fire-related uses, this funding will go to help first-responders who respond to earthquakes, floods, levee breaks, landslides and perform rescue duties. It will also protect our water quality and the reliability of our electric utilities, often impacted by fires.

**This initiative saves taxpayer dollars.** Improving California's response to emergencies and disasters will not only help to save lives, it will also help to save taxpayer dollars.

- When disasters strike in California every taxpayer helps foot the bill. Regardless of when and where disaster strikes in California, all taxpayers help foot the bill. Last year's Southern California wildfires alone cost taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.
- As insurers' costs increase, homeowners' insurance costs follow. As one disaster example, large wildland fires have resulted in nearly \$4 billion in insurer payouts since 2003. As insurers' costs increase in response to the fires, these costs eventually translate into higher premiums for homeowners.