

**MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND SOLICITOR GENERAL
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT BC
BRIEFING NOTE FOR DECISION**

TO: The Honourable Mike Farnworth
Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General

ISSUE: Declaration of a Provincial State of Emergency Related to Public
Safety Concerns with Wildfires

BACKGROUND:

- As of July 20, there are approximately 300 active wildfires, 34 of which are classified as interface fires largely focussed in the Cariboo and Okanagan regions of the province.
- At present approximately 2,800 properties are on evacuation order and close to 16,000 properties on evacuation alert.
- The situation continues to deteriorate as a result of very dry conditions, sustained drought and a combination of higher than normal temperatures, and unsettled weather leading to new fire starts from lightning strikes and fire growth due to high/gusty winds.
- The fire danger rating is high to extreme throughout all of central and southern BC, including the Kootenays, and a large area of eastern Vancouver Island.
- The situation is particularly concerning given the early and devastating start to the wildfire season in late June with the fire in and around the Village of Lytton and adjacent reserves, and current conditions expected to persist for the foreseeable future through the remainder of the summer.
- Fire smoke continues to impact much of the southern interior as well the far northeast areas of the province and a Smoky Skies Bulletin was issued July 19 for a 24-48 hr time period. Southern Alberta has experienced the impact of BC wildfire smoke and a number air quality statements have also been issued.

DISCUSSION:

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INDIGENOUS PEOPLES CONSIDERATIONS:

- First Nations leaders have expressed support for the Province declaring a state of emergency.
- The Province will continue to work with First Nations leadership and communities to address any needs related to the wildfire situation.

OPTIONS:

Option 1: Declare a Provincial State of Emergency (Recommended)

- Declare a provincial State of Emergency by Ministerial Order under the authority of s. 9(1) of the EPA to apply to the whole of the province.
- Include authority for employees of EMBC, RCMP "E" Division and "local authorities" within the province as defined in the EPA, their employees, servants and agents, to be empowered pursuant to Section 10(1) of the EPA, to do all acts and implement all procedures that are considered necessary to prevent, respond to or alleviate the effects of the emergency.
- Make the effective date of the order to be 12:01AM July 21.
- The order largely mirrors similar declarations made in 2017 and 2018 related to wildfires.

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OTHER MINISTRIES IMPACTED/CONSULTED:

- Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development consulted.

RECOMMENDED OPTION APPROVED 1 DATE:



Honourable Mike Farnworth
Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General

July 20, 2021

PREPARED BY:

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REVIEWED BY:

	Initials	Date
DM	TR	July 20/2021