PRESS RELEASE

Friday, June 17, 2016
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 2 p.m.

Santa Barbara County Proclaims Local Emergency due to Sherpa Fire

(Santa Barbara, CA) – At 10:10 a.m. on June 17, 2016, Santa Barbara County proclaimed a local emergency due to the Sherpa Fire currently burning 4,000 acres north of Goleta. The proclamation was made by the County Office of Emergency Management; the Board of Supervisors is expected to act formally on the proclamation at its next meeting on Tuesday, June 21, 2016.

Proclaiming a local state of emergency is an essential step for local governments dealing with significant incidents. It ensures that all county resources are available for the fire control efforts. Having the proclamation in place also helps facilitate a State Declaration of Emergency should further evacuations and damage require that declaration.

“The safety of the public and our firefighters is our top concern, as well as preventing damage to structures, infrastructure and the rich agricultural resources that are threatened by the fire,” said Santa Barbara County Supervisor Doreen Farr. “Due to the real potential for additional evacuations and further damage to agriculture and natural resources, the proclamation of a local emergency is necessary,” she added.

There has been damage to agriculture and further threats remain a concern. Agriculture is a $1.48 billion industry in the County - the number one industry in the County. The fire has affected avocado, lemon and olive groves as well as grazing land. Damage assessments are still underway.

The Sherpa Fire started off Refugio Road at 3:15 p.m. on Wednesday, June 15, 2016. To date, 4,000 acres have burned and the fire is 5 percent contained. Currently, 1,230 personnel are devoted to the fire under the unified command of U.S. Forest Service, CAL FIRE and Santa Barbara County Fire. Two-hundred seventy structures are under 72-hour threat. One out building has burned. No injuries have been reported.
Gusty sundowner winds are expected each afternoon through early morning this weekend, possibly peaking in intensity Saturday evening. Relative humidity is expected to remain mild, generally above 30 percent during the late afternoon, with good overnight recoveries in the early evening hours through Saturday night. Significantly hotter and drier conditions are expected beginning Sunday. Wind presents the biggest challenge to fighting the fire, as well as extreme heat predicted this weekend.

MEDIA ONLY
Joint Information Center 805-696-1188
Hashtag #SherpaFire

County of Santa Barbara Fire, Sheriff, Office of Emergency Management and Public Health departments have posted information on their social media including Twitter, Facebook and Nixle.

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Note to Editors: Please find attached the County’s official Proclamation of Local Emergency.