

Burnet County Emergency Declaration Request

Date: March 12, 2024

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Governor of Texas
c/o Chief Texas Division of Emergency Management
P. O. Box 4087
Austin, Texas 78773-0001

Dear Governor,

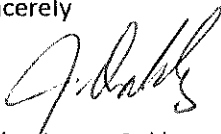
In 2017 the nation experienced a Total Solar Eclipse that was viewable by all of the 50 United States. Prior to the 2017 event, the last Total Solar Eclipse that was viewable in the United States was in 1979. In 1979, we did not have the practices and systems in place that we take for granted now (i.e. – after-action reviews, National Incident Management System, National Response Framework, the internet, etc.). Many agencies followed these practices and made their after-action documentation available via the internet for jurisdictions to learn from what they did right and wrong in order to respond and prepare for the next Eclipse on April 8, 2024. However, those states and jurisdictions that were in the path in 2017 had to figure much of this out on their own. Most of the states affected in 2017 do not have mass displacement plans like we see in Texas with hurricane evacuation plans. They relied on “experts” who had traveled to other nations around the world to create their planning assumptions.

Though we do not expect damages or critical infrastructure failure due to direct impacts like a hurricane, tornado, flood, etc. This event is expected to bring a large influx of visitors to Burnet County, at least doubling the population therein. Hotels, vacation rentals, campgrounds, RV parks, and state parks, if not at capacity already, are expected to be by the weekend prior to the eclipse. April 8 will be the most challenging as day trippers and other individuals travel to areas within totality to view this event. This eclipse day impact is expected to at least double travel times across the county and the region. This influx is expected to increase public safety response times; limit the availability of critical resources, i.e. – fuel, food, water, etc.; and overload cellular infrastructure to the point of being unusable. This event is expected to be of such magnitude to be beyond the response capabilities of Burnet County agencies and jurisdictions to manage.

Through over a year of research, planning, and preparation, it is my intention to sign a Declaration of Disaster for Burnet County for the period of April 4 to April 10, 2024. Pursuant to Chapter 418 of the Texas Government Code, I am requesting your Office to declare a state of emergency for the State of Texas for this same time period and issue directives to appropriately mitigate and respond to this emergency.

I look forward to your response in this matter.

Sincerely



Judge James Oakley
Burnet County, Texas
220 South Pierce St.
Burnet, TX 78611

PROCLAMATION DECLARING A LOCAL STATE OF DISASTER

WHEREAS, The April 8, 2024 Total Solar Eclipse will bring tens of thousands of visitors to Burnet County which will likely more than double the population. This influx in population threatens to strain local resources and their ability to respond to routine emergencies in a timely manner, while also threatening the ability of residents to obtain daily needs such as fuel, food, water, medications, and other necessities. This influx in population is expected to begin as early as April 4, 2024 and last through April 10, 2024. The largest impacts will be experienced on April 8, 2024 as individuals and groups travel to areas within the Path of Totality;

WHEREAS, critical infrastructure, especially cellular and transportation, are expected to be overwhelmed during this period. This will impact and impede the ability of residents to report emergencies and first responders to respond.

WHEREAS, Burnet County and its various partners at the state and local levels have been engaged in planning activities for over a year and realized the potential impacts to life and property as a real threat to residents and visitors;

WHEREAS, this threat has resulted in a collaborative planning effort that has culminated in a comprehensive, county-wide strategy to mitigate, to the best degree possible, the above impacts.

THEREFORE, Burnet County sees prudent to issue a burn ban under this declaration in accordance with Local Government Code Section 352.081(c)(2) in order to mitigate possible outbreak of grass or wildland fires which would further stress public safety resources and hinder response times across the county, thus exacerbating the expected impacts.

THEREFORE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 418.108 OF THE TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE, WE HEREBY PROCLAIM THE EXISTENCE OF SUCH DISASTER AND DIRECT THAT ALL NECESSARY MEASURES BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AS AUTHORIZED BY THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF TEXAS BE IMPLEMENTED TO MEET THIS DISASTER:

1. That a local state of disaster is hereby proclaimed for Burnet County pursuant to Section 418.108 (a) of the Texas Government Code.

2. Pursuant to Section 418.108 (b) of the Government Code, this Declaration of a local state of disaster shall continue for seven (7) days unless extended by the Burnet County Commissioners' Court and then for so long as such conditions exist.

3. Pursuant to Section 418.108 (c) of the Government Code, this Declaration of a local state of disaster shall be given prompt and general publicity and shall be filed promptly with the County Clerk of Burnet County.

4. Pursuant to Section 418.108 (d) of the Government Code, this Declaration of a local state of disaster activates the Burnet County Emergency Management Plan.

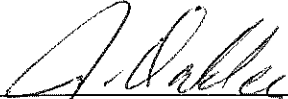
5. The purpose of this order is the mitigation of and response to expected, assumed, and or imminent impacts resulting from disruption of critical infrastructure systems.

BE IT THEREFORE ORDERED that the residents of Burnet County adhere to the following recommendations:

1. Register all public and private events with an expected capacity of 50 or more people by filling out the form on bctxeclipse.com.
 - a. The purpose of this is to assist public safety agencies in prepositioning resources to better serve the residents and visitors to Burnet County.
2. Make appropriate preparations by purchasing enough supplies to get through the weekend prior to and the day of the Eclipse.
 - a. Grocery stores and fuel stations may run low on supplies.
 - b. Buy what you need and do not engage in panic buying as that may cause a shortage in and of itself.
 - c. Pickup prescription medications prior to the weekend prior to April 8.
3. Do not schedule appointments or errands to be run on April 8.
4. Have a backup communications plan in case of emergency.
5. Know when to call 911.
 - a. True emergency involving a threat to life, limb, or eyesight or the threat or occurrence of bodily harm.
6. Sign up for local alerts through WarnCentralTexas.org

This Declaration and Order shall take effect on April 4, 2024 and expire at 11:59 PM on April 10, 2024 unless amended by the Burnet County Commissioners' Court.

DECLARED AND ORDERED THIS THE 12th DAY OF MARCH 2024,
effective immediately.



Burnet County Judge
Judge James Oakley