

GOVERNOR'S VETO
AB 986 (Muratsuchi)
As Enrolled September 16, 2025
2/3 vote

SUMMARY

This bill adds "landslide" to the conditions constituting a state of emergency or a local emergency.

Senate Amendments

Adds a coauthor and makes other non-substantive changes.

Governor's Veto Message

This bill would add a "landslide" to the conditions under which the Governor may proclaim a State of Emergency and local authorities may proclaim a Local Emergency.

I appreciate the author's goal to clarify paths to emergency proclamations, but this bill is unnecessary. Under existing law, California's Emergency Services Act already grants the Governor broad authority to proclaim a State of Emergency in response to "conditions of disaster or extreme peril to the safety of persons and property." In addition to the enumerated list of exemplary events, this language encompasses comparable events such as landslides, mudslides, and related geologic hazards without the need for further statutory amendment.

My administration has exercised and will continue to exercise the authority to respond decisively to landslides and associated hazards; adding "landslide" as a separate enumerated condition in statute would not expand these powers or provide additional tools for communities or first responders. In fact, it could be interpreted to suggest that events not explicitly identified in statute are ineligible for an emergency proclamation, which would unduly limit a Governor's power to respond to disasters.

COMMENTS

Declaring Emergencies: Among other things, the California Emergency Services Act gives the Governor authority to proclaim a state of emergency in an area affected or likely to be affected when: conditions of disaster or extreme peril exist; the Governor is requested to do so upon request from a designated local government official; or the Governor finds that local authority is inadequate to cope with the emergency. Local governments may also issue local emergency proclamations, which is a prerequisite for requesting the Governor's Proclamation of a State of Emergency.

Current statute provides multiple examples of conditions that may constitute an emergency, including, but not limited to, earthquakes, fires, and floods. This bill would add landslide to that list. However, neither the Governor, when making a state of emergency declaration, and a city or county, when making a local emergency declaration, are limited to declaring a disaster for only the examples provided in statute. A catch-all statement in Government Code Section 8558 (b) and (c) authorizes state of emergency and local emergency declarations for "other conditions," as specified.

Recent Efforts to Add Conditions Constituting a State of Emergency or Local Emergency: In 2024, Senator Allen ran a substantively similar bill to add "landslide" to the conditions constituting a state of emergency or a local emergency (SB 1461(Allen) of 2024). This bill died on the Assembly inactive file at the end of the 2023-2024 session.

In 2021, Senator Dodd and Assemblymember Levine each ran a bill that would have added a "deenergization event" to conditions that constitute a local emergency (AB 1403 (Levine) of 2021) and state of emergency (SB 52 (Dodd) Chapter 597, Statutes of 2021), respectively. SB 52 (Dodd) was signed by the Governor, while AB 1403 (Levine) was vetoed with the following message: "This legislation is unnecessary, as existing statute provides broad emergency authority when disaster conditions are met." The following year, SB 468 (Dodd, Chapter 537, Statutes of 2022) added "electromagnetic pulse attack" to the list of conditions constituting a state of emergency or a local emergency and was signed by the Governor.

Landslides: The California Geological Survey (CGS) classifies landslides based on the type of material (rock or soil) and the type of movement (falls, topples, spreads, slides, or flows). CGS provides technical input and advice to Cal OES during and after major landslide events and wildfires to anticipate post-fire debris flows. They produce reports for OES and local emergency agencies to help evaluate ongoing hazards and plan recovery efforts. The California Department of Conservation monitors and maps landslides across the state, providing regular updates on their website.

According to the Author

"In recent decades, natural disasters in California have become more frequent and severe, due in part to climate change. On the Palos Verdes Peninsula, land movement that began gradually in the 1950s has accelerated to as much as four inches per week. This increased movement has displaced residents and threatens essential infrastructure, including roads, sewer lines, and utility systems. Despite the serious risks and costs posed by accelerating land movement, current law does not explicitly recognize them as qualifying events for state emergency assistance. AB 986 adds "landslides" to the list of qualifying events to give affected communities a clearer path to declare emergencies and take action to protect public safety and infrastructure."

Arguments in Support

According to the City of Rancho Palos Verdes, "AB 986 expands the definition of disasters constituting a state of emergency or a local emergency under the California Emergency Services Act to include landslides... By doing so, the bill gives affected communities a clearer path to declare emergencies and take action to protect public safety and infrastructure."

Arguments in Opposition

None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Senate Committee on Appropriations:

- 1) Unknown potentially significant cost pressures in the event that a state of emergency is called due to a landslide (General Fund, special fund, and federal funds). The actual fiscal impact will depend on, among other things, the severity of the landslide, area(s) impacted,

emergency response strategy required, and the duration of the state of emergency proclamation.

2) No additional costs to the Office of Emergency Services (OES).

VOTES

ASM EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: 6-0-1

YES: Ransom, Hadwick, Arambula, Bains, Bennett, Calderon

ABS, ABST OR NV: DeMaio

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 11-0-4

YES: Wicks, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Elhawary, Fong, Mark González, Hart, Pacheco, Pellerin, Solache

ABS, ABST OR NV: Sanchez, Dixon, Ta, Tangipa

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 79-0-0

YES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

SENATE FLOOR: 40-0-0

YES: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Reyes, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 80-0-0

YES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

UPDATED

VERSION: September 16, 2025

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FN: 0002134