October 18, 2022

Marin County Board of Supervisors
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903

SUBJECT: Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, presentation on Response to Extreme Heat Events in Marin and use of the National Weather Service (NWS) HeatRisk forecast.

Dear Supervisors:

RECOMMENDATION: Receive an update on countywide planning for extreme heat events in Marin County.

SUMMARY: Heat waves are increasing in duration, frequency, and intensity across the state, posing an emerging threat to our communities. The County, cities, and towns need a structured response based on established criteria. Marin County Office of Emergency Service (OES) and Marin County Public Health recommend aligning with the State of California and California Department of Public Health (CDPH) in their use of the NWS HeatRisk forecast to assess the county’s risk profile and to initiate readiness, warning, and response actions during excessive heat events.

NWS has developed the HeatRisk forecast to better address heat risk and prepare communities for upcoming heat events. It provides a real-time, geo-targeted quick view of heat risk potential over the upcoming seven days. Marin County’s Emergency Medical Services Agency (EMSA) ran a retrospective report through FirstWatch that confirmed the NWS HeatRisk Level 3 (Red) correlated with an increase in heat-related emergency calls during the county’s September excessive heat event.

The use of cooling centers is a common strategy to prevent heat-related illnesses. The County of Marin is partnering with local jurisdictions to plan for the activation and management of cooling centers during excessive heat events. Confirmed cooling centers operated by local towns, cities, and community partners will be posted at the Marin County Public Emergency Portal https://emergency.marincounty.org/. OES and Public Health will partner to increase access to cooling centers for residents of unincorporated Marin.

COMMUNITY BENEFIT: Heat is a well-known health threat; cooler environments reduce heat exposure and prevents negative health outcomes. Cooling centers are a relatively low-cost strategy that a wide variety of community stakeholders can implement using existing infrastructure and personnel.
EQUITY IMPACT: Access to air conditioning can prevent heat-related morbidity and mortality. Low-income populations may have limited access to air conditioning or may be hesitant to operate air conditioning and cooling units due to potentially high electricity costs during peak heat hours. Cooling centers can provide a cool environment for these individuals.

FISCAL IMPACT: There is no fiscal component associated with acceptance of this report.

REVIEWED BY:  
County Administrator [ X ] N/A [ ]  
Department of Finance [ ] N/A [ X ]  
Human Resources [ ] N/A [ X ]  
County Counsel [ ] N/A [ X ]

Respectfully Submitted,

Benita McLarin  
Director