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The Future of the National Weather Service Today

The Fire Season of 2019 brought unique challenges to emergency management in California due to Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) events initiated during forecasted high wind events. In October 2019, a historic high wind event was forecast reminiscent of almost exactly two years prior, which rapidly spread four major wildfires across the North Bay Area within two days in 2017, causing 31 fatalities and causing billions of dollars in damage. Emergency managers were aware of the dire situation which could unfold in these high winds and prompted the activation of county EOCs across the Bay Area. The local NWS forecast office in Monterey exceeded their local resources to deploy meteorologists at these EOCs and reached out to the NWS Western Region Operations Center to bring in meteorologists from neighboring offices to support Bay Area deployment. In total, the NWS supported 5 county EOCs with 8 meteorologists from 6 different NWS Weather Forecast Offices in the Bay Area alone during this event. Other California offices outside of the Bay Area also supported their local EOCs and the State EOC during this wind event. The NWS continues to build the capacity to support our partners when local resources are exceeded, and is encouraging emergency managers to reach out to their NWS partner offices for EOC activation involvement, planned or unplanned.

Presentation Theme: Highlight the importance of the relationship between emergency management and the NWS, supported by the One NWS - 2017 Weather Act.

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