

DECLARATION OF LOCAL STATE OF DISASTER REGARDING THE THREAT
OF NEW WORLD SCREWORM

WHEREAS, the Texas Disaster Act of 1975 authorizes the presiding officer of the governing body of a political subdivision to declare a local state of disaster if the presiding officer finds that a disaster has occurred or that the occurrence or threat of disaster is imminent; and

WHEREAS, Section 418.108(a) of the Texas Government Code authorizes the County Judge, as presiding officer of the governing body of the County, to declare a local state of disaster upon the occurrence or threat of disaster; and

WHEREAS, the Texas Animal Health Commission is charged with protecting the livestock, domestic animals, and poultry of this State and with controlling animal diseases and animal pests, and county commissioners courts shall cooperate with and assist the Commission when requested, as provided by Section 161.003 of the Texas Agriculture Code; and

WHEREAS, Section 418.190 of the Texas Government Code requires the Texas Animal Health Commission to prepare and maintain an agriculture emergency response plan as an annex to the State Emergency Management Plan; and

WHEREAS, on January 29, 2026, the Governor of Texas issued a statewide disaster declaration to prevent the spread of the New World screwworm fly, stating that although the pest is not yet present in Texas or the United States, its northward spread from Mexico toward the southern border poses a serious threat to Texas livestock and wildlife; and

WHEREAS, the New World screwworm (*Cochliomyia hominivorax*) is a destructive parasitic pest whose larvae infest living warm blooded animals and can cause severe injury, death, and substantial losses to livestock, wildlife, companion animals, agricultural operations, and related commerce; and

WHEREAS, Duval County is vulnerable to significant harm to livestock, agriculture, wildlife resources, related business activity, and property interests if the threat of New World screwworm materializes within the County; and

WHEREAS, the County Judge of Duval finds that the threat of introduction or spread of New World screwworm constitutes an imminent threat of disaster within the meaning of the Texas Disaster Act and that extraordinary measures are warranted to prepare for, prevent, respond to, and mitigate that threat;

NOW, THEREFORE, PURSUANT TO SECTION 418.108 OF THE TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE, I, ARNOLDO CANTU, COUNTY JUDGE OF COUNTY, TEXAS, AS PRESIDING OFFICER OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF DUVAL COUNTY, HEREBY FIND THAT THE THREAT OF DISASTER ARISING FROM THE POTENTIAL INTRODUCTION AND SPREAD OF NEW WORLD SCREWWORM IS IMMINENT AND DECLARE A LOCAL STATE OF DISASTER FOR DUVAL COUNTY, TEXAS.

1. Declaration.

A local state of disaster is hereby declared for Duval County, Texas, due to the imminent threat posed by New World screwworm.

2. Activation of Emergency Management Measures.

This Declaration activates the appropriate recovery, mitigation, preparedness, and response aspects of all applicable local and interjurisdictional emergency management plans and authorizes the furnishing of aid and assistance under this Declaration.

3. Coordination with State and Federal Agencies.

The County's Emergency Management Coordinator and other appropriate County officials are directed and authorized to coordinate with all appropriate agencies and stakeholders regarding surveillance, reporting, public information, preparedness, and response activities related to the New World screwworm threat.

4. Use of County Resources.

All available County resources reasonably necessary to cope with this threatened disaster are authorized for use in accordance with applicable law.

5. Public Information and Protective Actions.

County officials are authorized to issue and disseminate guidance to livestock owners, veterinarians, agricultural operators, exhibitors, and the public concerning identification, reporting, prevention, and response measures relating to the New World screwworm threat.

6. Filing and Publicity.

This Declaration shall be given prompt and general publicity and shall be filed promptly with the County Clerk in accordance with Section 418.108(c) of the Texas Government Code.

