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BY: Chelsea Clark
SANDRA K. DUCKWORTH, COUNTY CLERK



**EMERGENCY DECLARATION OF DISASTER AND
ORDER PROHIBITING OUTDOOR BURNING**

WHEREAS, Newton County is currently experiencing extremely dry conditions and a high wildfire danger, creating a risk to life and property; and

WHEREAS, the Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) for Newton County exceeds 600, indicating drought conditions that can quickly lead to uncontrolled wildfires; and

WHEREAS, Texas Government Code §418.108(a) authorizes the County Judge to declare a local state of disaster when a disaster has occurred or is imminent, and to take necessary actions to protect public safety;

NOW THEREFORE, I, Ronald J. Cochran, Newton County Judge, pursuant to the authority granted by Texas Government Code §418.108, do hereby proclaim a Local State of Disaster for Newton County, Texas, and order the following:

Prohibition on Outdoor Burning

Effective immediately, all outdoor burning of combustible materials is prohibited in the incorporated and unincorporated areas of Newton County, Texas. This includes but is not limited to burning trash, brush, campfires, and any outdoor activity that could produce flames or sparks capable of igniting a fire.

This Order does not prohibit burning activities related to public health and safety that are specifically authorized by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), such as firefighter training, utility operations, or prescribed burns conducted under TCEQ supervision.

Duration

This emergency declaration and order shall remain in effect for seven (7) days from the date of issuance, unless terminated or extended by the Newton County Commissioners' Court.

Enforcement

A person who violates this Order commits a Class C misdemeanor, punishable by a fine not to exceed \$500, as provided in Texas Local Government Code §352.081(h). This Order may be enforced by any duly commissioned peace officer in Newton County.

Filing and Publicity

Pursuant to Texas Government Code §418.108(c), this Declaration shall be given prompt and general publicity and filed with the County Clerk of Newton County.

Effective Date

This Declaration and Order take effect immediately upon issuance and shall remain in full force until Thursday, April 16, 2026, unless extended or terminated earlier.

DECLARED AND ORDERED this 9th day of April, 2026.

Ronald J. Cochran, Newton County Judge

ATTEST: Sandra K. Duckworth, by Chelsea Clark, Deputy
Sandra K. Duckworth, Newton County Clerk