

# CONTROLLER JOHN CHIANG

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## Controller Urges Agencies to Prioritize Claims In Wake of Southern California Fires

*Also Urges Fire Victims to Take Advantage of Emergency Tax Relief*

**SACRAMENTO** – State Controller John Chiang today urged State agencies and departments to give top priority to any claims or requested payments that require expedited delivery to Southern California counties affected by the recent wildfires.

“We may be able to provide assistance by speeding up the flow of essential funding, ensuring that state and local agencies with staff on the front lines will have the resources necessary to provide critical services to any victims and displaced families in Southern California,” Chiang said.

In a [letter](#) to agency secretaries, department directors and accounting officers, Chiang asked for lists of priority claims deemed critical for the seven counties affected by wildfires.

The Controller’s Office has up to 15 days to pay a claim. However, Chiang directed his office to expedite the payment process and process priority claims on an emergency basis within 1-3 days. Chiang also ordered the suspension of customary fees charged to agencies for processing priority claims.

“This tragedy has already taken a serious toll on these important regions, and all divisions of government should expend their best efforts to offer assistance,” Chiang said.

Checks will be issued by mail, and recipients unable to access their mailing address should check the [United State Postal Service website](#) to determine where to find their mail.

Chiang, who also chairs the Franchise Tax Board (FTB), yesterday directed the tax agency to offer emergency tax relief to fire victims.

“By claiming a disaster loss on last year’s taxes, those who lost their homes or suffered property damages can get additional funds to help them through this tragedy,” Chiang said.

The FTB will allow victims to receive additional tax refunds this year by immediately reporting their disaster losses through amended 2006 returns. FTB will also suspend any billing notices from being sent to the seven affected counties.

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