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STATEMENT BY J. STROM THURMOND, GOVERNOR OF
SOUTH CAROLINA, DECLARING AN EMERGENCY FOREST
FIRE SITUATION IN THE STATE. FEBRUARY 27, 1950.

Because of the increasing number of new forest fires breaking out, and the destructive spread of fires already raging, I hereby declare an emergency forest fire situation in the entire eastern and southern portions of South Carolina; that is, all of the area east and south of U. S. Highway Number One.

The National Guard of South Carolina has been alerted and ordered to stand by with men and equipment, ready to cooperate with the effort of the Commission of Forestry to prevent further damage to our forests.

All law enforcement agencies and officers are requested to cooperate with state, district, and county forest fire officers in the investigation of responsibility for fire occurrence, and in the strict enforcement of forest fire laws.

All residents of South Carolina are urgently requested to set no fires in, or adjacent to, any woodlands or fields until heavy and soaking rains have occurred.

The traveling public is cautioned to exercise the utmost care with fire, cigarettes or other smoking tobacco, and matches.

I cannot over-estimate the importance of complete and unflagging cooperation of all persons in this emergency. A desperate forest fire situation exists over most of the State, especially in the area from the Sand Hills to the Coast. There has been no appreciable rainfall in the past three months, and forest areas are tinder dry. Except during brief periods of light rainfall, fire occurrence has been on the increase since middle January.

The Commission of Forestry informs me that its personnel and equipment has been taxed to the limit. From 100 to 115 new fires are occurring each day, while fire fighters are seeking to hold in check the hundreds of blazes already burning. During the past week alone, 627 new fires burned over nearly 25,000 acres of land.

Original Statement,
J. Strom Thurmond
Governor

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Weather forecasts indicate that no rain can be expected until the latter part of the present week, and the forest fire situation will probably grow more serious before it comes.

South Carolina cannot afford to be careless when our forest woodlands are at stake. I therefore earnestly request the maximum cooperation of every citizen in this emergency.