



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY  
HERNANDO COUNTY FIRE RESCUE

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To: Jeff Rogers, County Administrator  
cc: Lisa Hendrickson, City Manager  
From: Paul Hasenmeier, Fire Chief & Public Safety Director  
Date: January 8, 2026  
Re: Recommendation to enact County-Wide Burning Ban

With the on-going lack of precipitation, Hernando County Fire Rescue has recognized a spike in the number of brush fires.

The current Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) for Hernando County is 604 (Moderate/High) as of January 7, 2026, which is a 3-point increase over the prior days reading with the Florida Fire Service. The County is on track to reach severe drought/fire conditions. The highest rating on the scale is 800 (Desert-like conditions).

Conversations with other area fire departments have yielded the following information:

- Pasco County – Monitoring
- Citrus County – Burn ban
- Sumter County – Monitoring

The Florida Department of Agriculture is forecasting below average precipitation as we continue through the driest months. Exception to the burn ban may be granted by the Florida Forest Service after a request for such exception is submitted by the individual concerned and an onsite inspection is made and is determined by the Florida Forest Service representative that such burning can be safely accomplished.

HCFR is recommending the implementation of a County-Wide Burn Ban, in accordance with Hernando County Ordinance, which would apply to all unincorporated areas of Hernando County and the City of Brooksville. The burn ban will be reviewed at each BOCC meeting until rescinded.