



August 10, 2021

Presiding Judge
Solano County Civil Grand Jury
Hall of Justice
600 Union Ave.
Fairfield, CA 95433

Subject: Cordelia Fire Protection District Response to 2020-2021 Report "Wildfires on The Horizon Solano Homes at Risk"

Your Honor:

The Cordelia Fire Protection District fully agrees with the findings and recommendations of the above Grand Jury Report. The last several years have clearly demonstrated we are living in a new normal in Northern California. The Report acknowledges this, and the historic fires (even as this is written) in the State attest to this new normal. In addition to documenting our agreement with the Report, we also offer highlights of specific actions required to implement the findings of the Report:

- Jurisdictional boundaries among fire districts and agencies combined with segmented dispatch systems create confusion, delayed fire and medical responses, and inefficient utilization of limited resources. A unified CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) system among the cities and unincorporated areas of this County is a viable solution that has been successfully implemented to address these deficiencies in other Counties with Contra Cost County being an excellent, nearby example.
- A unified Solano County Fire District for the unincorporated areas, that manages fire and medical services under a common umbrella with continuous, reliable funding for facilities, equipment and staff while maintaining the personalities of the current entities (developed in response to the types of volunteer personnel available in those areas) has the highest chance of success in Solano County at the lowest cost. The closest analogy would be how the United States is organized as a republic of independent States under a common Federal government. Without this flexibility we may find that the lower cost, flexible character of our mostly volunteer resources would need to be replaced with more costly, fully paid staff that no longer involves the community to the extent present today. A combination of paid staff with a strong volunteer component can provide the depth of resources required to respond to more than single unit responses while presenting a front-line defense against our wildland urban fire risks present in this County.
- Utilize policy and operational planning resources where they are best leveraged. The excellent County staff is best suited for administrative policy development. The many experienced Fire District staff and Board members are best suited for operational and resource policy development and execution planning. Together the sum of these two resources will be far more productive through collaboration than a top-down development approach. Simply stated, there are many



smart people available at or through the Fire Districts who understand “the problems” and can thus recommend “the solutions” to ensure the best utilization of funds, people and resources. There is no need to reinvent the wheel, however it is imperative to address the root causes of current issues, and not just throw money at the problems.

- Immediate and urgent short-term funding to address the gaps in personnel, equipment and resources sufficient to address needs in 2021/2022. Although our District has been relatively successful with grants and grants are an excellent source of funding for specific activities, they are neither long term nor guaranteed. Additionally, the period of performance to research, apply for and potentially receive grants is measured in many months, sometimes exceeding a year. However as noted, they are not a source of continuous funding to ensure uninterrupted operations, much less addressing immediate needs.

If after review of our response the Board of Supervisors and County Staff wish to incorporate some or all these actions into a comprehensive plan for implementing the Grand Jury’s Report findings, we are ready to fully collaborate for the benefit of the residents of the County, the people we serve and protect.

We appreciate that the County and Board of Supervisors have choices of how it will proceed now that it has the Report in their hands. This includes the choice of no action at all. However, we firmly believe that inaction is not an acceptable choice. The wildland urban interface risks in Solano are so high that immediate and urgent action is required to avoid the unintended consequences of inaction or slow response to act. This District and its staff are prepared to assist the County in the development and implementation of a plan that will not only address the specific findings in the Grand Jury Report but will address the specific actions required to greatly mitigate the risks and their root causes present in this County today.

Thank you for your consideration of our input. We look forward to collaborating with County staff in the near future.

Sincerely,

Chief Dave Carpenter
Cordelia Fire Protection District

Jeff Dittmer
Board of Directors, Chair

Cc: CFPD Board of Directors
VFPD Board of Directors
R. Seithel, LAFCO