



## SUISUN FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

445 Jackson St  
Fairfield, Ca 94533

Honorable Judge Donna Stashyn,  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
County of Solano  
600 Union Avenue  
Fairfield CA 95433

Honorable Judge Stashyn,

**RE: Response to Grand Jury Report: Wildfires On The Horizon Solano Homes At Risk!**

Suisun Fire Protection District is nearly an all-volunteer agency of 30 firefighters and 6 miscellaneous volunteers that provide emergency response to the community it serves. With the exception of two full time paid personnel, everyone else volunteers their time to serve the citizens of that either live in the boundaries or pass through the boundaries.

**Finding #1 – Solano County’s Fire Protection Districts are critically understaffed, under equipped, and underfunded to protect rural areas and adjacent cities from this season’s wildfires and future wildfires**

**Response to Finding #1**

Suisun fire Protection District partially agrees. Suisun fire Protection District protects 138 square miles of tax supported area and an additional 30 square miles of state and federal land that do not supply any funding. The district does this with approximately \$381,000 tax dollars. The district also receives other funding through responses to the California Mutual Aid system in the summer months, has instituted an impact fee for new construction and charges a nominal fee for plan checks and burn permits. Suisun Fire Protection District does not compensate or reimburse their volunteers for expenses or stipends to provide their time. When the area of coverage is compared to the cost of providing services it will be easy to see that Suisun Fire Protection District provides an excellent service in a very cost effective manner. This is accomplished through Commissioners that volunteer their time to convey the needs of the constituents of the District, a Fire Chief who provides overall management of the District, to Chief Officers who manage the emergency operations of District, to Captains who provide supervision to the Engineers and Firefighters who provide the services. Another group of volunteers

provide support for fire prevention inspections, plan checks and weed abatement inspections. There are additional volunteers that run very important programs such as the Boy Scouts of America Fire Explorer program that has 6 youths that in many cases go on to become volunteer firefighters. All in all, this is a very efficiently run organization with mostly all volunteer help that provides a very effective service to the community it serves. The District at the current time has sixteen pieces of fire equipment, with the newest being a 2018 & the oldest being 1981. All of the equipment is maintained and in working order ready to respond. The District has a Duty officer on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days week, 365 Days a year with paid staffing of 2 during business hours that is augmented by Volunteers.

***Finding #2: While LAFCO is bringing expert advice to the table to determine the path forward to address the increasing danger from wildfires, the pace at which it is going is too slow to address immediate wildfire concerns.***

**Response to Finding #2:**

Suisun Fire Protection District disagrees. Certainly, the wildfire concerns have increased in the past several years with major fires that have burned in to Solano County from neighboring counties. The Wildlands in majority of the District are in the State Responsibility Area (SRA) which is the jurisdiction of Cal Fire. The District has been working with Cal Fire and other Districts in the County with creating Fire Safe Councils, with the long term vision of a countywide Fire Safe or Fire Wise organization that served the entire County in terms of wildfire preparedness activities. The District & Cal Fire Community Education and Engagement programs have increased over the last few years in our District, conducting a wildfire risk assessment in their area helping them develop action plan on how to reduce the risk of fire and fuel reduction and home hardening strategies. Hazardous Fuel Reduction is the big one. We need to reduce hazardous fuels that further the spread of wildfire and put residents and key infrastructure at risk. This past year, Twin Sisters Road & Suisun Valley Road got cleaned up at the bottom portion with the help from the Fire Safe councils and Solano County Roads to reduce the fuel loads to make a safe evacuation for the residence in the area.

***Finding #3: Transitional financing is needed to equip the FPDs with new equipment and resilient firefighting techniques to adapt to the environmental changes now presented by the combined challenges of extreme heat, drought, and gale-force winds along with random power outages.***

**Response to Finding #3:**

Suisun Fire Protection District partially agrees. As identified earlier, the District only has approximately \$381,000 tax dollars. The district also receives other funding through responses to the California Mutual Aid system in the summer months, has instituted an impact fee for new construction and charges a nominal fee for plan checks and burn permits. The District out of the little tax dollars that it receives has to pay Solano county for its services that it uses, a few examples are, the County charged the District approximately \$21,900 for audit fees, Dispatch fees will be close to \$20,000 for this year, Auditor control office fee was \$11,000, all these fee's take a large amount of Tax dollars away from the District that could be used for seasonal Firefighters during the summer time months. The District at the current time has sixteen pieces of fire equipment, with the newest being a 2018 & the oldest being 1981. All of the equipment is maintained and in working order ready to respond. Solano County has made a few resources available to assist the District with some of its prevention projects, one of those projects was Hazardous Fuel Reduction on the sides of the roads on Suisun Valley Road and Twin Sisters Road.

I would like to thank the Solano County Grand for their time invested in the Wildfires on the Horizon Solano Homes at Risk! Report. The Grand Jury's recommendations and comments are greatly appreciated.

Respectfully,



Fire Chief  
Alfred L. Abruzzini