



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

AGENDA ITEM

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

GREG COX
First District

DIANNE JACOB
Second District

PAM SLATER
Third District

RON ROBERTS
Fourth District

BILL HORN
Fifth District

DATE: April 24, 2001

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT: **IMPROVING FIRE PROTECTION IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY** (District: All)

SUMMARY:

Overview

The Viejas Fire has unfortunately reminded residents of the dangers of brush fire in the rural areas and that a devastating fire can break out year round if ideal conditions exist. Several initiatives need to be considered to improve the delivery of fire service and protect the safety and property of residents. The fire season in San Diego needs to be based on potential fire conditions, not arbitrary dates. Since there is a year round threat, we need a year round fire season. In addition, burn permits and brush clearing need to be a priority over environmental impact and air quality concerns when it clearly is a matter of public safety.

This board letter calls for several initiatives to enhance the resources that local fire agencies have and to improve the brush challenges that many agencies and residents face.

Recommendation(s)

SUPERVISOR JACOB:

1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to draft a letter to the members of the San Diego's State and Federal delegations, for the Chair's signature, urging the State of California and the United States government to establish a year round fire season in San Diego County.
2. Authorize the County's State and Federal lobbyists to advocate for establishing a year round fire season in San Diego County.
3. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to review current County regulations for residential brush clearing to determine if property owners should be allowed to clear brush further than 100 feet from a structure and report back to the Board in 120 days.

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact associated with this request.

SUBJECT: IMPROVING FIRE PROTECTION IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY

Business Impact Statement

N/A

Advisory Board Statement

[Click [here](#) and type statement, or type N/A if not applicable]

BACKGROUND:

The Viejas Fire has unfortunately reminded residents of the dangers of brush fire in the rural areas and that a devastating fire can break out year round if ideal conditions exist. Several initiatives need to be considered to improve the delivery of fire service and protect the safety and property of residents.

The California Department of Forestry and the United States Forest Service are fully funded only during a predetermined fire season that usually lasts between April 15 and December 15. Vulnerability exists when full resources are not available and there's no significant potential for a large brush fire. Fire agencies should not be limited by a budget that is only good for eight months of the year. Stations close down and apparatus are not available for immediate use. Property may be destroyed and lives can be lost during a time when San Diego County is facing a year round fire threat, but state and federal fire agencies are not fully prepared year round. It is important for San Diego's State and Federal delegation to push for additional funding so that these fire agencies are appropriately funded year round.

Currently, the County allows for 100 feet of brush clearing for fire prevention purposes around structures, both inside and outside the MSCP. Although the County worked with fire agencies in coming us with these guidelines in 1997, there is a need to reconsider this matter to see if the County should allow the clearing of greater than 100 feet from structures. Public safety must take priority over environmental protection. In some cases, it may be essential for fire agencies to have the discretion to allow property owners to clear brush up to 150 feet or more from a structure.

In addition to brush clearing, burn permits must be easier to obtain from the California Department of Forestry. The Air Resources Board and the Air Pollution Control District need to re-evaluate the impact that residential brush burning has on air quality. Recently, the California Department of Forestry has been mandated to be more stringent with the issuing of burn permits. Unfortunately, this has impacted residents who rely on burning brush to clear their property and reduce the threat of fire spreading on their property. The effect on air quality from a large scale wildfire is far greater than the impact associated with issuing burn permits. The California Department of Forestry needs to have the discretion of issuing burn permits without the restrictive interference of air quality agencies.

This Board letter calls for several initiatives to enhance the ability of local fire agencies to protect lives and property. It also helps residents to better protect their property from a major fire incident. I urge your support.

SUBJECT: IMPROVING FIRE PROTECTION IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY

Sincerely,

DIANNE JACOB
Supervisor 2ND District

SUBJECT: IMPROVING FIRE PROTECTION IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET

CONCURRENCE(S)

COUNTY COUNSEL REVIEW	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	
Written disclosure per County Charter § 1000.1 required?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
GROUP/AGENCY FINANCE DIRECTOR	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Requires Four Votes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
GROUP/AGENCY INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

Other Concurrence(s): [Click here and type, or type N/A if not applicable]

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: [Click here and type]

CONTACT PERSON(S):

<u>[Click here and type]</u>	<u>[Click here & type, or space bar to delete]</u>
Name	Name
<u>[Click here and type]</u>	<u>[Click here & type, or space bar to delete]</u>
Phone	Phone
<u>[Click here and type]</u>	<u>[Click here & type, or space bar to delete]</u>
Fax	Fax
<u>[Click here and type]</u>	<u>[Click here & type, or space bar to delete]</u>
Mail Station	Mail Station
<u>[Click here and type]</u>	<u>[Click here & type, or space bar to delete]</u>
E-mail	E-mail

AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE: _____
[Click here & type]

SUBJECT: IMPROVING FIRE PROTECTION IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET

(continued)

PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOARD ACTIONS:

[Click **here** and type action(s), or type N/A if not applicable]

BOARD POLICIES APPLICABLE:

[Click **here** and type applicable policies, or type N/A if not applicable]

BOARD POLICY STATEMENTS:

[Click **here** and type required statement(s), or type N/A if not applicable]

CONTRACT NUMBER(S):

[Click **here** and type numbers, or type N/A if not applicable]

SUBJECT: IMPROVING FIRE PROTECTION IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

DEPARTMENT: [Click here and type]

PROGRAM: [Click here and type]

PROPOSAL: [Click here and type]

	FUTURE YEARS ESTIMATED BUDGET OF PROPOSAL IF ADOPTED				
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
	Budgeted Amount For Proposal	Proposed Change in Budgeted Amount	Proposed Revised Current Year Budget (a+b)	1st Subsequent Year	2nd Subsequent Year
Direct Cost					
Revenue/Other Offset					
NET GENERAL FUND COST					
Staff Years					

Sources of Revenue/Other Offset for Proposed Change and Subsequent Years:

Space-Related Impacts: Will this proposal result in any additional space requirements? Yes N/A

Support/Other Departmental Impacts: Yes N/A

Remarks: Yes N/A