



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

1600 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, ROOM 335, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92101-2470

AGENDA ITEM

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
2019 FEB 25 PM 2:59
CLERK OF THE BOARD
OF SUPERVISORS

DATE: March 12, 2019

01

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT
FIRE SAFETY ENHANCEMENTS (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

The San Diego region is home to a year-round wild fire threat. Since the Cedar Fire in 2003, the County of San Diego has spent over a half-billion dollars to improve fire and emergency services. However, more can be done to improve our fire preparedness and make our region more fire resilient.

As mentioned in the State of the County speech earlier this month, the County must continue to invest in improvements across all spectrums of fire protection. These areas include pre-fire strategy utilizing the support of fire safe councils, strengthening new construction, increasing the frequency of defensible space inspections, enhancing pre-fire vegetation management, and improving pre-fire emergency planning with a greater emphasis on technology and GIS mapping.

Today's action directs the Chief Administrative Officer to work on a plan to strengthen wildfire protection in existing and future communities with a focus on five key objectives, and to return to the Board within 90 days with recommendations to meet the objectives.

RECOMMENDATION(S)
CHAIRWOMAN DIANNE JACOB AND SUPERVISOR JIM DESMOND

1. Direct the CAO, working with the County Fire Authority, the Sheriff's Department, other County Departments and outside agencies, to develop a plan to strengthen wildfire protection in existing and future communities, with the focus on the following five objectives.

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- A. Develop and implement a more cohesive pre-fire strategy, including expansion and increased support to fire safe councils.
 - B. Enhance pre-fire vegetation management, including expanding community chipping programs, working with federal, state and local agencies to develop a cooperative vegetation management plan, and pursue legislative changes to reduce or eliminate burdensome environmental regulations for controlled burns, and fire breaks to protect life and property.
 - C. Improve pre-fire emergency planning, including enhancing our existing technology and GIS mapping to better protect at-risk communities.
 - D. Strengthen fire safety measures in new construction, including stricter building requirements in the fire code for homes built in high fire risk areas.
 - E. Reduce loss from wildfires in existing structures, including increasing the frequency of defensible space inspections and the development of a grant program for fire resistant building improvements.
2. Direct the CAO to return to the Board within 90 days with recommendations to meet these objectives.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

The San Diego region is home to a year-round wild fire threat. The fact is that San Diego County remains one bad Santa Ana wind away from a disaster. Since 2003, local wildfires have claimed 25 lives and caused damage in the billions. Taxpayers spent over \$100 million just fighting these fires.

Our community partners are one of our greatest assets in preparing for wildfires. We currently have 37 fire safe councils throughout the region that provide invaluable education and assistance to the communities they serve. This action will build upon the great work being done by our fire safe councils by establishing unified countywide priorities and support.

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As new homes and communities are built in coming years, we must make sure they are built to give people and property the greatest chance of survival. Also, nearly 60,000 houses in the unincorporated area sit on land considered to be at high risk or at very high risk of wildfire. Homes built in high fire risk areas should be constructed using safer walls, vents and other fire-resistant materials. Building improvements should also be made to existing homes in order to better withstand a major wildfire.

In addition, we must reduce the defensible space inspection cycle from five years to three years, expand community chipping programs, work with federal, state and local agencies to develop a cooperative vegetation management plan, and pursue legislative changes to reduce or eliminate burdensome environmental red tape.

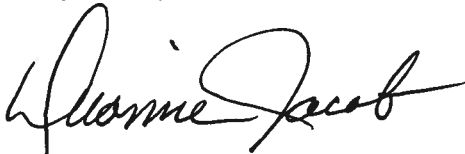
Furthermore, San Diego County has an opportunity to enhance and improve our pre-fire preparation through utilizing new technology. New and improved Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping, station electronic wall map displays, evacuation process trainings, and enhancements to the County Fire Authority pre-fire website are all actions we can take to better prepare ourselves for the next large-scale fire event.

Today's action directs the Chief Administrative Officer to work on a plan to strengthen wildfire protection in existing and future communities with a focus on five key objectives, and to return to the Board within 90 days with recommendations to meet the objectives.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's proposed action supports the Living Safely Strategic Initiative in the County of San Diego's 2018-2023 Strategic Plan by enhancing and improving our fire preparedness capabilities.

Respectfully submitted,



DIANNE JACOB
Chairwoman, 2nd District



JIM DESMOND
Supervisor, 5th District

ATTACHMENT(S)

N/A

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AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET

REQUIRES FOUR VOTES: Yes No

WRITTEN DISCLOSURE PER COUNTY CHARTER SECTION 1000.1 REQUIRED
 Yes No

PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOARD ACTIONS:
N/A

BOARD POLICIES APPLICABLE:
N/A

BOARD POLICY STATEMENTS:
N/A

MANDATORY COMPLIANCE:
N/A

ORACLE AWARD NUMBER(S) AND CONTRACT AND/OR REQUISITION NUMBER(S):
N/A

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: District 2 and District 5

OTHER CONCURRENCE(S): N/A

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