REPORTER’S TRANSCRIPT OF LAFCO PUBLIC INPUT MEETING

RE: REORGANIZATION OF STRUCTURAL FIRE PROTECTION AND
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES IN UNINCORPORATED
SAN DIEGO COUNTY

RAMONA, CALIFORNIA
MARCH 1, 2007

REPORTED BY SHANNON L. MARCOS, CSR NO. 8348

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Mr. Ott: Michael Ott welcomed the public to the March 1, 2007 public outreach meeting and made some opening remarks before introducing the project team. Mr. Ott indicated that Shirley Anderson would give a PowerPoint presentation and an overview of the Micro Report on the Reorganization of Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services in Unincorporated San Diego County.

Mr. Ott provided an opportunity for Public Comment.

PUBLIC COMMENT

MR. OTT: Are there any questions related strictly to the presentation that Shirley gave? Why don't the three of you, I think there were three of you, could you come up to the front aisle here, identify yourself, and state your name.
MR. McKIM: My name is Jim McKim, M-c-K-i-m, from Elfin Forest Harmony Grove area. My question is related to the staffing levels showing three and four people on duty. How is the number of stations derived at, that the staffing levels have to be set at, is it the current number of stations that are in the district or additional?

MR. TRAYLOR: For the Phase 1 agencies there are 42 fire stations, not including CDF fire stations. These are CSA fire stations, volunteer fire stations, fire protection district fire stations, there's 42.

MR. McKIM: So changing all those from whatever level they're at now to those levels that were shown?

MR. TRAYLOR: Yes. If you took Model 5 without volunteers, minimum level, three people on duty, dedicated BLS first responder. If you took the same model with volunteers, we looked at the viable volunteer organizations, left them in place and will offer to embed, if you will, either a paramedic or an EMT to be on duty 24 hours a day 365 days a year to work with them. In a perfect world it would be one of your volunteers.

MR. McKIM: So that career volunteer would be a combination of somebody paid 24 hours a day?

MR. TRAYLOR: Our whole idea is to put a dedicated BLS or ALS element in every one of those fire stations. And also for those organizations that are already exceeding that level of service there is no reduction of service. I'll give you an example, Julian Cuyamaca has ALS transport, there's no reduction in that level of service.
MR. ALDEARY (PHONETIC): Kevin Aldeary, representing Yuima, Mootamai and Pauma water districts. And the question is the water districts are now excluded but if they decide that they want to be part of Phase 1, is that possible?

MR. OTT: Anything is possible. If you're volunteering to give up some of your service responsibilities, you provide more than just fire protection, you provide water service, you may have some other miscellaneous services, there would be a means by which if it's a cooperative arrangement, that you would be able to divest yourself of select services with LAFCO. There would be some terms and conditions associated with that, but it would be something that we would want to talk to you about.

But, as Shirley mentioned, this would not be something that LAFCO would be able to force upon you as a municipal water district. Ramona Municipal Water District, Yuima, Mootamai and Pauma are all in that same classification. We did research the matter. We indicated at the onset over a year ago when we initiated this reorganization there may be a complication with removing or mandating the removal of the service functions from those four entities. And we just recently concluded that there is a legal impediment.

I'd also just like to mention when I was making introductions that John Traylor, who just spoke, he is the executive director and consultant to LAFCO, but the executive director of the task force on fire protection and...
EMS in the County. I neglected to give you that affiliation last Tuesday as well.

I think there's one more question before we'll shut things down and go to the official speaker part of the presentation.

MS. ARSIVAUD-BENJAMIN: My name is Jacqueline Arsivaud-Benjamin. That's A-r-s-i-v-a-u-d Benjamin. And I'm with the Elfin Forest Harmony Grove Town Council.

Clarification on the costs: Under the Micro Study, do the costs include the maintenance costs such as replacement of engines, equipment, buildings, or simply the staff costs, because what you had was just personnel costs, so I'm just curious?

MR. TRAYLOR: Within the Micro Study there's an example. It's one of the exhibits. I think it's Exhibit 1 or 2 that breaks down overhead costs. There's about 14 million dollars of overhead, which includes maintenance, materials, supplies.

MS. ARSIVAUD-BENJAMIN: All right. And then my second question was, at the beginning you mentioned that you looked at what other counties did outside, and that while I think some of what they did was interesting, it was really not applicable because they had substantial tax revenue. And I'm just curious, is it simply because they are more densely populated or they have a different funding mechanism or why is it not weighted different?

MR. GOSS: I think one of the things that happened is that many of those other counties have combined various
districts, like in Sacramento County they put together various fire protection districts, but they had a property tax base before Proposition 13 and that continues to today. We have many fire agencies today that were created after Proposition 13 that have very little, if any, property tax base.

MS. ARSIVAUD-BENJAMIN: Thank you.

MR. OTT: Are there any questions before we get to
MR. TRAYLOR: Let me see if I can remember the questions. Why doesn't the County have a county fire department?

MR. HIGBE: Yes.

MR. TRAYLOR: The Board of Supervisors in, I think, 1973 chose to get out of the fire service business, the Board of Supervisors.

Second question was, are we only looking at BLS. We looked at a whole range of models from BLS to ALS, both three people on duty, dedicated first responders.

MR. HIGBE: Is that acceptable? Is that really considered acceptable? Is it considered to be one actual option?

MR. TRAYLOR: I'm trying to figure out how to answer the question. It is a level of service. If your community currently has a higher level of service of ALS, it will maintain at ALS, but that is the minimum level of service as opposed to advanced first aid, first responder, so the commission chose those models as the minimum standards.

And then the third question, remind me.

MR. HIGBE: It had to do with water districts. Since it doesn't look like there's enough funding for any of these programs, if the water districts are considered, is that suddenly a source of funding that we didn't have before?

MR. TRAYLOR: It would not be a substantial amount of funding. There still is about 22 or 20 million dollar
gap in funding with or without the water districts, but I'll let Shirley address that.

MS. ANDERSON: We'll just address Ramona because it's comparable in relative size to the other two water districts. There's about $2,000,000 at Ramona that would be attributable to structural fire protection, so it's not enough to bridge that gap.

MR. OTT: We will continue with the more formal part of the workshop tonight and we'll start with the speaker slips. What I'll do is call two people up at a time and it looks like we have -- actually, we have around four empty seats up here. I'll call four people up at a time and you can take a seat up in the front row here. Donn Grace, Tim Costanzo, Nona Barker and George Lucia. And just take a seat anywhere, and we will start with Donn.

MR. GOSS: This comment is just housekeeping and that is as the speakers come up here, this is very delicate, so if you use the podium, don't stretch the microphone.

MR. GRACE: My name is Donn Grace and I'm from the Elfin Forest area. I'm a former board member on the Elfin Forest Fire Department but here tonight I'm representing myself.

First of all, I would like to just thank LAFCO for the opportunity to speak tonight and say that my sense is LAFCO is doing a very evenhanded and responsible job with this whole operation here. I appreciate that.
Speaking of my concerns, I believe that many of us in Elfin Forest are satisfied with our fire department. It meets our fire and EMS needs and more, much more than that. The department serves us as sort of glue for our community and we like the ultimate control of the whole operation. At the same time, I believe that many of us recognize the need for better coordination with other fire departments in the greater San Diego area. I, myself, voted for Proposition C and I appreciate LAFCO’s efforts, you know, to try to implement Proposition C and consolidate those fire services. I followed your efforts as near as I could over the years, and as I have read the Micro Report, there are several things that I have concerns over and two of which I would like to speak about tonight. So, firstly, all the options presented in the Micro Report require funding increases over present levels, which I think is contrary to what Proposition C called for, which I hope is to achieve consolidation with constant levels of funding.

My first question is, given the situation can LAFCO recommend any of these options since they’re all at odds with Proposition C and its requirements? Secondly, given that a best bad option must be chosen, in the spirit of maintaining local control and sense of community I personally would prefer to see the regional fire protection district and its eleven board member to be chosen. In the same spirit of community and so forth, my second question, which has two parts is this, could each of the principal subdistricts within the larger regional MPD district have
its own representative elected to the Board? Pretty much like we elect congressmen now from our districts. And, also, does the Regional Fire Protection District Plan require that career firefighters be present at all stations? It seems to me that if this was not a requirement, that we might be able to have this regional fire protection district and keep the total costs down to the present levels. So that's pretty much what I had in mind tonight and I thank you for taking my comments.

MR. OTT: We will take a stab at answering these questions. The first one has to do with Prop C, the second one has to do with the governance of a regional fire district. And I'll defer to our panel here. Shirley and John Goss can fight over that question. They can think about the response as I respond to the first question.

Regarding Prop C, that was an advisory ballot measure that 81 percent of the people approved in an advisory manner that specified that through a reprioritization of revenues, not new taxes, that those reprioritized monies would then be allocated for fire protection and would not cost anybody in existing communities any additional monies to support a regionalized fire protection system. In terms of the options that we evaluated in the Micro Report and whether or not those satisfy the intent of Prop C, it's conceivable that any of those options could satisfy the spirit of Prop C. We talked at some length at the first workshop about a legislative measure that's proposed right now by Senator Hollingsworth, SB806, I believe it is, that would shift tax monies from...
school districts, reprioritize that, and allocate that to fire protection agencies. And then the State under the legislation would backfill the amount of funds that are shifted from school districts so that everybody remains the status quo within the school community. That particular legislative proposal would probably satisfy the spirit, the intent of Prop C.

We will be discussing in LAFCO Monday morning at 9:00 in the morning that particular legislation. And Supervisor Jacob who was a sponsor with her colleagues on the Board of Supervisors of that bill will be weighing in and providing some comments on that particular legislation. If through the County's Fire Enhancement Program that additional monies are allocated to provide the levels of service that we've shown up on the screen beyond the eight and a half million dollars to bridge that funding gap, that would also appear to satisfy the intent of Prop C in that it would not result in an additional tax burden on any particular community or individual. So there are ways of satisfying the spirit, the intent of Prop C with respect to reorganization.

John, do you want to answer the governance question?

MR. GOSS: Sure. The question was if you had a regional fire protection district instead of election at large, could you elect them by district? And the answer is yes, you could. But you have to realize that about 80 percent of the population in this proposed district is in limited
areas, Deer Springs, Ramona, Valley Center, East County and Rural. It's possible that all eleven people could be elected at large, but if you try to spread it out by district, it would not necessarily mean that the more rural areas would be represented, because under California law you have to elect by the people, basically split up the districts by population. You can take into account certain geographical areas, but population is the basic way in which to do that.

Now, to address this to a certain extent, as you remember, there were like five areas, operational areas, and what has been proposed in the plan is that each one of those areas would have a battalion chief that would oversee like eight or ten stations, somewhere in that range. We are recommending -- there's not a recommendation, but a

potential condition of approval would be to establish advisory committees in each one of those five areas. Because right now we have if you take into account the policymakers that are elected by districts, the CSAs, even with the 501-C3s, there's probably over 100 people that are involved in setting policy and giving direction to providing fire service in the rural areas. And all of a sudden you have eleven people. So we feel that maybe advisory committees would be a way for people to have a voice for the whole area.

The other question was keeping volunteer firefighters at volunteer stations. Certainly there's some pros and cons to that. You can have an all volunteer station, and maybe John should address this, but in some areas where there's not a sufficient volume of calls, there
may be some advantage of having at least one career staff there at those stations. For one thing that person can provide some level of training to the volunteers there, whereas right now in some areas a volunteer resource has to leave the community to go get training. And so that would provide an opportunity for that volunteer resource to stay in the community which does not have a high volume of calls.

MR. TRAYLOR: Let me just also add that there's a whole range of volunteer-type organizations. Some do not stay at the station, some are not there at all unless there is a call that comes in. There are some stations believe it or not in San Diego Rural Fire Protection District with zero volunteers. So there's a whole range from zero volunteers to a very active volunteer program such as Elfin Forest. Our whole idea is to take those viable volunteer programs and enhance it if they want to. If they have all the resources they need and all they need is support, then that's fine. We want dedicated BLS first responders 24/7, that's the whole operation.

And as far as your question about other options, all the options were identified in the Macro Report. There were seven options from status quo to the four on, ALS. And one of those options two, three or four addressed what you just spoke about. So the Commission took a recommendation from the San Diego County Fire Chief's Association and Fire Districts Association to develop the SSP. That was the basis of going forward with this level of service.

MR. OTT: Thank you, John. Our next speaker is Tim.
MR. COSTANZO: I brought this question up at the last meeting, but I'm going to bring it up again. We know that benefit fees are supposed to stay in the community, but can those fees be restricted to maintain equipment and pay for the training of the volunteers or are these fees going to be available to pay the CDF employees that will be staffing these communities? If this happens, it will destroy the ability of the volunteers to keep training and keep the equipment up to approved standards.

The next question: If CDF is first out on calls and volunteers are only called when extra staffing is needed, after a few calls the volunteers will stop showing up and the system of volunteers will completely break down and cease to exist.

How would officers from volunteer stations relate to CDF officers on calls? For example, if a volunteer firefighter is trained to a higher level than a CDF paid firefighter on a medical call, who would be in charge of the patient? Another example would be if a volunteer firefighter is trained to swift water and the CDF officers are not trained to swift water, who would be in charge of the swift water incident?

Are you in all cases going to maintain existing ISO ratings or improve them?

How will existing automatic and mutual aid agreements be handled with the new fire service?

The existing volunteer fire stations are often the only place for small communities to meet and are usually the
central point of the community activities. Can you
guarantee that this will be allowed to continue under CDF
management?

Will the pooling of mitigation fees allow for
improved service in the areas where the development took
place? Pooling the fees would not allow a station close to
development to improve or expand services to keep the
quality of the service up with the larger responsibility.

Will a volunteer manual be put together as
suggested before the CDF program is put into effect and
require both CDF and the volunteer station to sign in
agreement?

Thank you.

MR. OTT: Let's see, how much time do we have here?
I think you had about five questions there and I'll just
summarize the questions and then John Goss, John Traylor and
Shirley can take a stab at answering them, or I can if you
two decide to pass the baton.

One of the questions had to do with benefit fees
and the restrictions that could be placed on them or, in
fact, if benefit fees are subject to restrictions. Another
question had to do with the relationship between volunteers
and CDF, and I think that would probably be a good question
for you, John, to take on. Another question had to do with
ISO ratings, that's probably has your name written all over
it too, John. Existing future mutual aid agreements, the
effects on those. And then I think there was a last
question about volunteer manuals that may be something that
a future agency should consider. So why don't you take two, three, four and five maybe.

MR. TRAYLOR: Well, Tim, I think you have made a huge leap in assuming that CDF will be the contract service provider.

MR. COSTANZO: Okay, whoever is going to do it.

MR. TRAYLOR: If you look at the Micro Study, it develops models based on local resources. Now, as far as costing comparisons and things like that, we did need to do due diligence and show the difference and in most cases there virtually is no difference when you look at the cost of the service. So I would not suggest that you make that huge leap that ultimately CDF will be the contract provider. They may. That would be up to the new governance. If it's a newly formed fire protection district, we've got fire protection districts now that are not signing those contracts. And that's up to the governance of that fire protection district. So as we go down the road, if you stay with the status quo, you're going to see an evolution of an enhancement program probably like you're seeing now. If you go to the County program, there may be a preference by the County Board of Supervisors, they're the governance, to continue with CDF. If you go to the CSA 135, again that's a way of capturing tax money, but the governance is still the County Board of Supervisors. But I would suggest that you don't take that big leap and assume that CDF will be the
MR. COSTANZO: Well, let's assume whoever takes over, whether it's CDF or some other paid-type situation, the same would hold true with all the questions?

MR. TRAYLOR: Okay. As I recall one of your questions was the facility?

MR. COSTANZO: Yes.

MR. TRAYLOR: I probably should have attempted to answer that the other night, but I didn't think quick enough. When you look at the Schedule A contract with CDF, really all you're paying for is the personnel costs, the apparatus is owned by the local organization. The facility is owned by the local organization. I personally would not sign a contract with CDF that gave them exclusive rights to the facility if that is, in fact, a community building, so I don't see that as an issue. It wasn't addressed properly the other day and I appreciate you bringing it up again, but those are community facilities. All you're doing is in a sense paying for personnel services.

ISO is really an element of fire ground, number of people on the fire ground and water supply. And unless development continues to build in infrastructure for water supply, that's the biggest factor for lowering ISO. And I would say the basis of providing structural fire protection and EMS, ISO is really, I would say, something that would come along as opposed to trying to build ISO or lower ISO ratings and hope that structural fire protection, EMS, will come along, you know what I'm saying.
MR. GOSS: Just a minor answer to one of the questions and that is about the recommendation we have a volunteer manual. That's a suggestion. There's some suggestions in our report, especially the ones on volunteers, that are basically like what I call road map items. It's setting forth suggestions for the new district to follow. LAFCO can't mandate that, but we would suggest strongly that there be a volunteer manual like the one used in Riverside County.

MS. ANDERSON: Jim, what was your question about benefit fees?

MR. COSTANZO: The benefit fees, would the complete fees still be able to be used by the volunteers themselves or is there a possibility it could be diluted and used to pay for the paid staff coming on?

MS. ANDERSON: Well, when you form a new agency, okay, policy decisionmakers are going to, one, set the service level, they're going to set the delivery mode, so this is the discussion: Is it going to be CDF, is it going to be local, is it going to be a combination? Whatever, we don't know, because we don't know who those people are yet.

MR. COSTANZO: But in either case, if you bring in paid personnel, would it be coming out of those fees or would it be coming out of some of the other fees?

MS. ANDERSON: We're talking about bookkeeping here to some point.

MR. COSTANZO: It's totally different.

MS. ANDERSON: We're talking about putting money into a reserve zone, okay. The money that is collected in
that zone has to be expended in that zone.

MR. COSTANZO: But that's keeping a volunteer agency now. If you start bringing in paid staff, then more money is needed than what's there.

MS. ANDERSON: Then that money would come from the new agency, whatever its source of funds.

MR. COSTANZO: So it wouldn't be diluting the money that's already there?

MS. ANDERSON: No. Okay, if you look at the budget for the new agency, a lot your baseline expenditures are the responsibility of the new agency, so facility maintenance, equipment maintenance, and all that stuff, some of it ceases to become the responsibility of individual pockets, because those pockets disappear. We now have one large agency. So that's why I say in some sense it's a bookkeeping measure, okay. You would be responsible for some expenditures, but you also would be -- local volunteer agencies would also be relieved of some expenditure responsibility.

MR. COSTANZO: I thought you said at the last meeting for the Chapter 501-C corporations they would be taking care of their own equipment?

MS. ANDERSON: It's not that they would be taking of their own equipment, it's that there's no mechanism in state law that can take away a private asset and those are corporations. We can't take that asset and say, okay, you've got some engines in Elfin Forest and we're going to take them and put them over there, because they belong to Elfin Forest volunteer.
MR. COSTANZO: Would automatically the County be taking care of all maintenance on the equipment?

MS. ANDERSON: I don't know if the County is going to have anything to do with it. Whatever the agency is or whoever the new policy board is--fire protection district elected, County if it's the successor agency--this would be all a function of service delivery and how you run that district. These decisions would be made by this new body. I can't tell you right now. Does that clarify?

MR. OTT: Let me just add to that and hopefully I won't muddy the issue. One of the objectives of the models that we've established in our Micro Report is to establish a minimum level of service, that means that some communities that are currently below that level of service right now would come up to whether it be a three-on-duty or a four-on-duty staffing level or with respect to emergency medical service, basic life support or ALS. That type of service level is not uniform throughout the entire County. With the additional funds on top of what exist right now in the community, those underfunded and underserved areas would come up to a standard level of service. For those communities that have approved benefit fees, special assessments, those assessments cannot be touched by this reorganization effort. The purpose of those monies will have to remain after reorganization just as the purpose exists today. So for those communities that have special assessments, there will be a higher level of service depending upon what the voters voted in related to those assessments, and we showed you the slides in terms of how
many communities and the dollar value of those assessments countywide that actually exceeds property taxes. So keep that in mind during some of the discussions here.

Nona, you're the next speaker.

MS. BARKER: You know, I can explain that really well. I can explain that benefit fee stuff really well. So if it's going to cost a dollar to pay somebody and we have 60 cents, they're going to give us another 40 cents to make the dollar, that's how it works. Sorry.

So my name is Nona Barker, B-a-r-k-e-r, and I'm the chairman of the board of the Elfin Forest Fire Advisory.

Once again, I'm going to thank you guys. I think you've done a wonderful job. You've kept the fire service informed. I think where everything has fallen down is the public has not been informed. I don't see many public. The public came with me, but I don't see a lot of public. I see all fire. So tonight I want to submit to you the resolution from the fire advisory board. I really don't want to read it because it's three pages long, but I will give you the highlights, is that the Elfin Forest Harmony Grove Fire Advisory Board of Directors with regard to County Service Area 107, as well as all existing funds and future revenue, recommend the LAFCO Micro Report for CSA 107 be removed from Phase 1 and placed into Phase 2 of the LAFCO Micro Report.

That's the basis of it.

I also want to explain to you about a meeting we held last night in Elfin Forest. It was a special fire advisory board meeting, all legally posted, notified and all
that kind of stuff. We've been keeping our residents informed all along about the Macro Study, you know, everything. The residents want to know, they demand communication from us, and last night they communicated. So similar to tonight's presentation, we borrowed a CD of the Power Point and Chief Twohy gave an absolutely great presentation on the Micro Study and attempted on the DPLU's plan and a question-and-answer period followed. And you know what the most asked question was, is why wasn't LAFCO doing this and how do we get DPLU to come and explain their proposal. So the public is interested. They want to know. I mean, they absolutely want to know. So, you know, a lot of other questions were similar to tonight and to Pine Valley's night, and we took a pretty good stab at answering those. The Fire Advisory Board though, we want the citizens, our community, to tell us what they want to do. And so by a show of hands we did an advisory vote and of the 140 plus residents that attended the meeting, and that was not including the Fire Advisory Board, the firefighters, or the auxiliary members of the community, so in all total there were close to 170 people at the meeting, but there were over 140 residents. And this is what they, the residents, directed the board of the Elfin Forest Harmony Grove Fire Department to continue to provide superior service demanded by the Elfin Forest Harmony Grove residents in County Service Area 107 as provided in the contract for fire services dated April 28th, 1982 between Elfin Forest and County Service Area 107 for the County of San Diego, and follow the 15-year plan created by the advisory committee.
Focus 15 Group in 2001, which included an additional fire station in Harmony Grove and full-time paid staffing.

To prove the community support and direction, I'm going to hand you 156 petitions signed by all registered voters. And not only does the petition support us, the petitioners also pledge to protest and cause a vote.

So these are the originals and they're for you and then here is our resolution. Thank you.

MR. OTT: George Lucia.

MR. LUCIA: I'm going to give you a break and give you no questions, just a comment. My name is George Lucia, 37 consecutive years in the fire service and 28 years back east, maybe that's the problem. I just want to say I represent Palomar Mountain Volunteer Fire Department. My community trusts me to make a decision on this. I try to keep them as informed as I can. We do have special support. They trust us to take care of them. It's hard to follow Tim because he definitely had some great comments, but I want to say that the LAFCO people have been 100 percent professional and you guys, you are absolutely, absolutely doing a great job for analyzing what is needed. I think my problem is, this is my personal problem, is I don't trust that your recommendation will go anywhere or will be received properly. I don't know that I have the evidence that the County is going to do the right thing. I am very concerned about a level playing field. I have had the opportunity in my past to work -- my job was to coordinate the career volunteers. I will tell you right now if you do not keep the
first-year firefighter, you will lose it. That is the core
of the community. Those are the taxpayers, they all have
mothers, brothers, sisters and friends, and you will feel
the repercussion of that if you don't do the right thing.
We're feeling the effects of it right now in Zone 8. I
don't know that we have the proper communications. I don't
know that there's proper trust, but I don't know that I'm in
the right forum to say that. I will tell you that I think
your report is great. I think you've come up with some good
answers. I think that if the right thing is done, it will
be a level playing field.

We talked about BLS and ALS responses and my
analysis is that if you go to the areas that are not
involved in this because they're fat with money, because
they have tax money, that you'll see that they run three
shifts with lots of paid people and with constant staffing.
And when you analyze their lines, 100 percent of their
medical, 100 percent of their ALS gets reduced, 95 percent
becomes BLS. And so we're training a lot people for a lot
of nothing. Maybe if you spread some of that out across the
county, your volunteers will be trained and have equipment
to cover what's going on.

As I said in the past where I worked, 72
municipalities, three of them paid, more equipment than the
entire City of New York, more fire exposure, volunteers are
alive and well, highly trained professionals working alongside career people. It can be done. But if you don't pay attention to that, this will not work and we'll suffer for it and all of this will be wasted. So I encourage you to please, please, I encourage everybody here to have the County do the right thing. Thanks.

MR. OTT: Thank you for those kind words. I would just like to say in my 20 plus years in government, I haven't seen as courteous a professional group as what we're witnessing here tonight as well as in Pine Valley, so it goes both ways. We appreciate the words that everybody is saying here.

The next four people that should come up to the front row, Gilbert Turrentine, Stephen Sheppard, Harry Seifert and Kevin Dubler. Sit anywhere in the front row and the closest person to me will get the microphone.

MR. TURRENTINE: My name is Gilbert Turrentine, T-u-r-r-e-n-t-i-n-e. I'm the Chief of San Pasqual Fire Department and I, too, would like to ask that our station be removed from Phase 1 of this operation. I think if Phase 1 fails, you're going to lose a lot of volunteer fire departments in the back country. I disagree with little served or no served district. I think all the volunteers are doing an outstanding job providing fire and EMS service in the community. I think they deserve a hand right now for what they have done. I've been a volunteer fireman in San Diego County for 55 years. I've been chief of our fire department for 22 years. I started with nothing. We were
almost bankrupt. Now we have 15 pieces of equipment and 65
volunteers. A lot of them are hoping to become paid
firefighters through this program. I would hate to
disappoint them and see them pushed out on the street
and have CDF come in and take their positions. Thank you.

MR. OTT: Stephen.

MR. SHEPPARD: My name is Stephen Sheppard and this
is only a short series of comments really not questions. I
also am a volunteer firefighter. I carry two hats. I'm
also a paid firefighter/EMT soon to be paramedic in Julian.
I've been in the fire service here for 10 years, but what I
want to talk about tonight is not necessarily the fire
service. I know a lot of people in this room. I've fought
fires with people in this room. One of the things that occurs
to me is the organization and the reorganization that's been
proposed is to augment or to overcome some of the problems
that we had during the Cedar Fire three years ago and that
we are going to attempt to improve structural firefighting
capabilities in the back country and improve EMS services.
I only want to speak about Julian since that's the only
place that I really know about. No. 1, the fire that swept
through Julian and burned down a significant number of our
homes was not a structural fire. It was a wild fire.
Structures were burned, but if we had 10,000 fire engines in
Julian and a 100,000 firefighters and 1,000 airplanes, it
would not have made any difference. That fire was going to
burn out when it was ready to burn out. The level of
professionalism that was displayed in Julian, in my opinion,
exemplary. Communication problems were significant. We haven't addressed any of that here. There's still no communication solution, not only in the back country, but our ability to discuss or communicate with San Diego Fire or any of the fire agencies that came down into my neighborhood to defend my home with me.

The other thing that we talked about is the improvement of EMS facilities. We have in Julian, and I am a paid, work 10 shifts a month on the Kelly schedule, spend 24 hours a day, 10 days a month in my station, three paramedics and three EMTs, 24/7 medical service. I need to point out to everybody that for the amount of money that this is going to cost 95 to 96 percent of the calls that we run in Julian are medical calls. They're not fire calls. They're medical calls. Do we need a paid captain and a paid engineer on 95 percent of our calls, no. We have people that show up for the calls when we have a fire. We have enough between retired professional firefighters who live in our district who are members of our fire department and CDF that we have a very good relationship within our community. For the five, the five structured fires a year that we have in our district, do we need to spend 23 million dollars? I'm sorry, I'm skewing your numbers and I apologize, I'm trying to make a point. The only thing that occurs to me, and this is the thing I really want to say, as a citizen, as a resident of this community, as a business owner in my community, to find that there is a bill that is being proposed that wants to take school district money from the
school districts, and at least in our part of San Diego County, to fund or to, quote, improve the fire service when the fire service is not where our problem is. Another Cedar Fire, forget it. We can have 15 fire engines fully staffed and paid for in Julian and it would make no difference at all. Am I proposing status quo, no, I don't think I am, but we need to think about this very carefully. I would rather that my kids could read and that the level of education in the State of California is the way it was when I went through elementary and junior high school and high school here than the way it is now. That's all I've got to say.

MR. OTT: Harry Seifert.

MR. SEIFERT: I'm Harry Seifert, S-e-i-f-e-r-t. I'm vice-president of the board of directors of the Julian Peterson & Associates Court Reporting & Video Services

Cuyamaca Fire Protection District. I've been elected to that position for the past 18 years. I've also been a firefighter in Julian Cuyamaca for the past 35 years. I have seven years' experience with two other departments in the state of New York and in San Diego County. As a board member I would request that we be put into category two. We have done our homework. We have lowered our ISO rating to a five-eight. And we've done that not only by the quality of our service, our equipment and our training, but we have water districts in the community that are capable of providing correct and proper fire flow.

You've talked about in one part of the Micro Report about we will bring the level up or bring the fire rating from a ten to a seven. That is going to be impossible to
achieve unless you have water. There is no organized water
outside the very few water districts or community service
districts in the back country.

Also the Cedar Fire, Proposition C was a knee-jerk
reaction to the Cedar Fire. I think everybody recognizes
that. The Cedar Fire was caused by mismanagement by the
Cleveland National Forest and by the state parks. Up until
the early 1980s the state park was doing controlled burns.
A whole new phase of administration came into the state
parks, no more controlled burns. Dead vegetation was
allowed to build up. Policies went from maintaining fire
breaks in the Cleveland National Forest to let's make
trailheads for hikers. That changed back in the 1990s. The
fire access road that would have stopped the Cedar Fire in
incipient stages was so overgrown. Two Julian engines, one
CDF engine and Engine 33 from the Cleveland could not get
any closer than a half a mile through brush as thick as this
building is big in late hours, you couldn't get firefighters
in there safely. If that fire break had been maintained,
they could have gotten within 500 feet of the start of that
fire. So there's other problems that need to be addressed
that's far beyond what LAFCO can do, but we've got to manage
the resources better, both for brush as well as the
resources of our firefighters.

MR. OTT: Thank you, Harry. Kevin Dubler.

MR. DUBLER: Kevin Dubler, D-u-b-l-e-r. I'm the
chief of Julian Cuyamaca Fire. I agree with everything that
Harry said in the proceeding. I just want to make a few
I'm not going to ask any questions. I'm going to make a few points about this whole proposal. The key to this thing, my little talk here, it's all about money. Everything about this proposal comes back to money. If we have the money, we can do it. If we don't have the money, we can't do it.

I want to bring up two things I brought up Tuesday night. Proposition C was a joke, because it didn't address money. All it said was how would you like to have a fire department countywide, wouldn't that be great, a firefighter in every driveway, but nothing was said about what it was going to cost. So then they said, well, we won't raise any new taxes. Well, that's robbing Peter to pay Paul. We're just playing a shell game with tax money. And it's going to cost 29 million extra dollars no matter how we slice the cake. So we've got to keep that figure in mind.

The benefit fee. The only point I made Tuesday night about benefit fees is if it takes $1,000,000 to staff a station, which it does, because we were just in negotiations with CDF for 3.0 staffing, that means three people every day, the quoted price was a $1,025,000 per year. So if you take $1,000,000 and we have benefit fees, we have two benefit fees, one is for structural fire protection, that's all it specifies. The other one was just recently passed and that is for a new station. My understanding is the one designated for the new station can't be used for anything but that new station, so that one is pretty safe. But our structural firefighting one, if it cost that million dollars to staff the engine and we get
$100,000 from our benefit fee, this new entity will give us
$900,000 and the other 100,000 will come from our benefit
fee. So our community residents don’t benefit at all from
their own benefit fee because they’re getting the same

Then we get into my portion about figures lie and
liars figure. And if you keep that in mind, I took the
figure right out of the LAFCO report, so I’m not accusing
anybody of lying. I’m telling you where these figures came
from so that you know there is no lying on these figures.
These are right out of this report. Model No. 5,
$58,000,783 and change. I took a start-up cost and I
amortized it over 10 years, so that’s $4,710,000 for each of
the first 10 years, because you got to amortize that money.
You can’t just say we’ve got 47 million dollars and we’re
just going to use it. It came from somewhere and it’s being
spent somewhere. So we take all that and we divide it by
the 8,725 calls that this whole region generates in a year
and it will cost us $7,277 per incident under this plan and
this is the chief plan. It gets worse as you look at the
other figures. So is this economy upscale? We keep hearing
economy upscale. I won’t go through Model 5A. Model 5A
$5,575 is what the figure comes to.
Right now for Julian Cuyamaca Fire optimistically
we have a $650,000 budget, that’s for our ambulance and fire
Both. And the reason I took both is because most of our

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calls, as you were told, are medical, so it's not fair to
exclude those calls and only take the fire side. So if we
take our average of about 475 calls a year, our current cost
is $1368 for each call we go on, which is absurd in and of
itself, but it's four times as cheap as the cheapest model
that we're proposing on this whole budget thing. So is it
really necessary to go this route? And do we really improve
service that much and I would say no.

Onto the DPLU plan, that calls for 4.5 million in
new revenue, so it would be status quo plus 4.5 million in
new revenue. The problem with that, as we discussed, at
$1,000,000 a station, we can only staff four more stations
countywide with four and a half million more dollars. So
where are those four stations going to be? Are they going
to be in Harmony Grove because they brought a bus load of
people down here? I think it should be, if I could get a
bus load of people down here. But at three zero staffing
that allows us to staff four more stations, so I don't
understand the DPLU project entirely. And I have read it
and I have read it carefully. I don't see where that's
going to benefit. It's going to be a real improvement over
what is already out there.

And then my final statement is Shirley Anderson
said speaking about start-up costs, I'll quote you here
Shirley, "We all know the cash isn't going to be there."

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Page 32
And my question is, is it going to be there for the operational costs when we start this new district? Thank you.

MR. OTT: Larry Jackman, Robert Krysak, I believe I pronounced that correct, Bob Kephart and Frank Twohy. Since you're here already, I'll give you the microphone.

MS. KRYSAK: Good evening, I'm Bob Krysak, K-r-y-s-a-k. And I'm the chairman of the board of directors of the Ramona Municipal Water District. And, again, I want to extend my thanks to LAFCO. They are doing a terrific job in analyzing the situation. And I have also no doubt that there are sections of this county which is underrepresented and underprotected. Ramona isn't one of them. So, please, leave us alone. And I say that with all affection. We're well funded. We have good facilities. We have a great contract with the CDF that provides great service in Ramona. Why would we fix something that isn't broken. And the fear is that what will happen is we will end up with an agency that is broken and underfunded and Ramona will suffer and so will the people in this community.

The board of directors at last Tuesday's meeting formally were gratified to learn that we are not being considered in Phase 1. And we also went on record as saying under no circumstances if things changed would we want to be considered in Phase 1. However, the question I have is if the Ramona Municipal Water District is not considered in Phase 1, why is it listed as such as SB806? And will that be amended or changed to remove the water districts from
that bill?

But, again, we applaud your efforts and we hope it brings responsible service to the rest of the county. But on an individual level, I have always found that government governs best that governs closest to the people that it represents. The one thing we don't want is our local authority to be transferred down the hill to some unknown agency, funding taken from us to support this funding agency. We're doing fine. We're funded. We're staffed. Please, leave us alone.

MR. OTT: Frank, since you're headed this way.

MR. TWOHY: My mistake. I should know better as a chief not to do that, but there are so many things that could be said. First of all, my name is Frank Twohy. I'm a citizen, resident of the Elfin Forest Harmony Grove area and the fire chief of the Elfin Forest Harmony Grove Fire Department. Our fire advisory board in subsequent letters that are all in process to you will outline all of the concerns of the department. But speaking on a few of them, I guess is a personal thing, and that's always a tough thing to do for an Irishman because you know they never take anything personally. But, in particular, there's a couple

of things, both plans do show the Elfin Forest Harmony Grove area with one station. And I'd like to remind the staff that I think after the last Department of Planning and Land Use and County Board of Supervisors meeting that the 750 home development in Harmony Grove was going to have a station, land and two paramedics. So that should, I think, be included in the figuring in your plans, so there should
be actually two stations, unless, of course, Ralph and Gary Pryer have other plans, and I'm not real sure what that is. So any rate, a number of things about the county plan does cause me some concern on a personal level.

The whole goal of the SSP and the whole goal of the reorganization is to really have no loss in level of service. The county plan includes dispatching through Monte Vista. As you know, CSA 107 Elfin Forest is an area that's an island that's surrounded by cities and other fully funded fire districts, and it's also dispatched through the North County, North Comm GPA. It happens to have medical dispatching costs as yet unidentified in the county plan. And we also have paramedic service as part of our community through CSA 107 or through CSA 17 and we receive lots of automatic aid through our paid neighbors who are nearby. So what happens is if it goes to Heartland, it then has to go through Heartland, then has to go through the North Comm and then has to identify all the other folks to come. So what happens is I do have a loss in service because I have a delay in response time, just no doubt about it.

The county plan also states that all of the paid people are what they call the safety people, those are the guys, I guess, that get paid to go out on the engines, have to be CDF employees. The Elfin Forest Harmony Grove Fire Department presently has three people, I don't really count much, but I'm one of them who happens to get paid. And we have another chief who acts as an administrative assistant and another person that keeps everything working and in
order who are paid and are there all the time. If they're not the safety people and paid by CDF, and they won't be, then what happens to my level of service and my guarantee that there are three people that are there all the time, five days a week, working, and over and above that we have all volunteers. So there's goes my level of service, once again that's affected by that. It's been a real concern on my part.

The county plan also says that there will be overhead management and that, again, if we go back to the safety deal, the CSA that I'm in would be serviced from a battalion chief in Valley Center, which is probably on a good day 30 minutes away. So what it says to me is that, by the way, you, Frank, as overhead really wouldn't be there because you're not safety. No. 2, Deputy Chief Denny Peterson & Associates Court Reporting & Video Services

LaVille, the retired chief or deputy chief of Rancho Santa Fe, 25 plus years wouldn't count. Chief Don Heyser, 34 plus years, City of Encinitas, just retired and deputy chief, wouldn't count. It would also mean that my battalion chief for 20 plus years wouldn't count as overhead. My overhead would come from Valley Center if they're not out doing something else. I consider that a loss in level of service. There's also a real interesting thing going on with the county plan and they're figuring on the value of volunteers and this upsets this Irishman just a little bit. If you look at their answer on Page 17, it says, "The value of volunteer contribution is six to 10 million dollars." I note in your plan that it's over twice that. I guess I can't help but wonder is that kind of what they really think
of the value of the volunteers less than half of what somebody else might think? Also the thing that I would like to think is that if you read the plan, as I did, and you read it through, and I have to do a funny courtroom thing, if you read it through, just say no to DPLU. Thank you.

MR. OTT: Larry.

MR. JACKMAN: Thank you. I had the opportunity to speak in Pine Valley the other day, at least I won't have to get out the snow scraper. I've never seen those before. I would like to address two things that were brought up. I would like to bring up two things and then bring up one other issue that has just come to mind listening to everybody here. The first thing is I participate in the fire district association meetings and I sit in on the fire chiefs meetings occasionally, and one thing I can absolutely assure you as was mentioned here earlier is that there has to be a solid renewable funding source or I don't think anything is going to move forward. All of the associations throughout the county have adamantly vowed that unless the County has some funding source, it just ain't going to happen. And there's too many people and too many places in this county that have, you know, put their reputation on the fact that no money, no ticket and nothing moves forward. And I would be the first one at that line to say the same thing.

The second thing, the Hollingsworth Bill, I had some knowledge about how that came about. In no way does it take away school funding. The County of San Diego pays a
significantly higher percentage in property taxes in that it
goes to schools than all the other counties in the state.
And what the Hollingsworth Bill is trying to do, and there's
try to provide a little more balance as to the amount of
money that San Diego County taxpayers pay towards the state
government. And any money that's shifted, the State by
law has to backfill so the schools are not affected.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I've got the Hollingsworth
Bill right here and it says increase the total amount of
property tax revenue allocated to each qualified school
district in the county by the fire protection agency payment
amount.
MR. JACKMAN: Correct. Now, if you read through
the rest of the bill, you'll see --
UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And there is no reason for
backfilling.
MR. JACKMAN: It's all in the language, but
regardless, the state law prescribes a certain amount of
allocation per daily attendance and that comes from the
school. That's the intent of the legislation and it's not
going to go anywhere given the school teacher unions and all
the other factors, it's not going to go to level one unless
the schools are made whole. Which kind of brings me up to
another area that I wanted to cover. It seems listening to
your group that most all of you don't have a great deal of
experience with labor unions. And I come from a district
that has a very proactive labor union. They are active in
the election process. They're very proactive in the funding
process of our district. And I talked to other elected officials, fire district board members throughout the county, and they also talk about how proactive the labor force is. So one thing I think we have to start to think about is that as we move forward, which isn't in the report, is the politics of labor's influence on the finances. You can go in and create the charts that are the median base salaries. There's no such thing as a median base salary. Whoever has the highest level of benefits, whoever has the highest level of salary, the highest total of comp, that becomes the benchmark that every paid gets, aspires to.

So we've looked at doing consolidations in the East County area of the district, San Miguel, Lakeside, Alpine, East County, and the problem -- everything comes together and it's all functional consolidation and it all makes great sense and scale to the economy until you get to the labor unions collective bargaining group; this one has the best health insurance and the highest value of health insurance; this one has the best retirement plan, and this one has the highest pay, and this one here is some other gadget, and then when they collect it they think, good, we put this whole package together.

Now, where I see the problem with this Phase 2, it's not so much a problem in Phase 1, because as I'm listening here it's all volunteer primarily, underserved, you know, you have CDF which is employees which are not the AFL, CIO type functionality in the politics. So I am concerned that the governance of the new entity, whatever
proactive labor in how the dollars are spent and where that 
money, then those resources. And I can assure you the 
concept is, okay, what salary and benefit levels do we want, 
how much money is there and whatever is left over is going 
to fund the rest of the organization. And that's the 
mentality that is out there, right, wrong or indifferent.

So I can kind of see this first phase working out 
when all this money comes in the pipeline. But the second 
phase, if this Hollingsworth Bill is only going to prescribe 
this one percent shift, which I kind of scratch my head and 
say, okay, that shift covers the underfunded Phase 1 level.
And the theory is that all the rest of the Phase 2 districts 
which are viable, funded districts, then are all going to be 
sitting back on their own saying, okay, when you go 
collectively get together and you're self-sustaining so you 
take the funded Phase 1 and the self-sustaining Phase 2, but 
when I see that combining, I'm very apprehensive of what the 
end result is going to look like, that stew as it starts 
getting mixed up, because I can assure you that Phase 2 
which is all labor, organized labor as far as the 
firefighters, staffing and process, when it becomes one 
agency that's going to be affecting all the volunteer 
groups, labor, how many people, the question of volunteer 
versus reserves.

I know in our district back in the early '90s
putting together a reserve program or revitalizing our reserve program was very difficult because, hey, labor looked at it initially as you're taking away a paid seat and a paid union member sitting in this seat. And I'm concerned about how this is all going to be filtered out and it's not addressed in the LAFCO report is the politics of labor and how that's going to affect the cost. And I can assure you, you might as well just stick another zero at whatever you guys are estimating when labor gets involved. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What district do you represent?

MR. JACKMAN: San Miguel. I've been on the San Miguel Fire District Board since 1992. They are by far one of the highest total comped in the county. There are some cities that are out there, but it's pretty high up there.

And our board -- tell you about the politics, our board is made up of -- it's a seven-member board. In 1992 when I was elected we had seven members on the board that were all from the public sector, I mean just community people who were wanting to, you know, like give back to the community. Now we have -- five of them are firefighters on the board or related to firefighters, like the wife of a firefighter. And there's only two of us left that are, let's say, out from the general public. And we've been opposed by the labor unions for the last few elections and

luckily we survived the election process the last couple of times. But they've got two people on the board, then they had three people on the board, then they had five people on
the board. So you got to, you know, start thinking about the governance and who's going to actually control the governance of this new group because labor is very proactive.

MR. OTT: Thank you, Larry. San Miguel Fire District by the way is a byproduct of consolidation. About 20 years ago, '88, so just about 20 years ago a byproduct of the Spring Valley, Grossmont, Mount Helix fire districts merging. It was actually my first fire consolidation that I worked on.

Our next speaker is Bob Kephart and then we'll call up the remaining three or four people. Bob, we saw you in Pine Valley, didn't we?

MR. KEPHART: Yes, we did. I'm Bob Kephart. I'm a resident of Elfin Forest. I'm on the Elfin Forest Fire Advisory Board and I'm a volunteer with Elfin Forest and have been on the advisory board and a volunteer for 18 years. So one thing I would like to go over that I guess on the one side that everything keeps getting missed, we keep looking at manning a station with one crew whether it's got a volunteer staff or it doesn't. And we may be a bad station to look at because we have quite a bit going on with our volunteers, but just from a money aspect. During a normal day that we talked about when 80 percent of our calls are medical aid and 20 percent are chasing snakes or going to structure fires or just doing things that it doesn't take a paramedic to do, it just takes someone with a little knowledge and two hands to go out and take care of, everything goes along just fine. But the knee-jerk reaction...
that caused this whole situation was the Cedar and Paradise 
Fire. I spent a week in a brush truck. You know, it's not 
the first time I've been to a fire and spent days and days 
out there doing it, and that's where we miss out. I think a 
lot of -- what the volunteers mean and what we're missing 
out on this one, we're going to put one crew in a station. 
In Elfin Forest we man two structure engines, two brush 
trucks, a water tender, an ambulance, and a utility, two 
command vehicles, and we can primarily -- when the chips are 
down, they're out there. During Paradise and Cedar we sent 
a structure engine to Los Angeles which came back and went 
to Cedar. I was on a brush truck. I spent a week at 
Paradise with our water tender at Paradise. At our station 
we had our ambulance and our brush truck and another 
structure engine covered with people, and they were there. 
Put a cost to that, and I keep hearing this 14 to 20 
million, if the cost of volunteers in this County isn't in 
the 60 to 80 million dollar range, it doesn't count, because 

And if we start eliminating them -- and it's being 
eliminated just by everybody's estimate. I see $250,000 for 
a volunteer here, a volunteer there. I don't see it all 
carved out. There's less money for volunteers than there is 
anything else. 6.8 million dollars for paid staff and that 
staff is overhead. It's going to take care of things that 
it's just not there. 
I've talked with Riverside people. I found out the 
union is going to kill the volunteers and that's their job.
They want that seat on the truck. They don't want a volunteer to be there. And if the County doesn't step up and make the volunteers in this county a prime organization and prime people, the County is going to suffer, this thing is going to fall apart, and all of us are going to pay four times what we're paying in fire taxes now. We tax -- our district is the highest in your book. You're going to find out we're in the $400 range for benefit unit or for household and everybody else is down. If everybody paid their fair share, the County would be in just fine status. And I know the Board of Supervisors can't force anybody to pay their way, but they better start looking at the real numbers of what volunteers are worth and what it's going to take to do it. If Dianne Jacob is going for one percent, she better start thinking about Phase 2 and she better be going for two percent because she started a train rolling. If she's going to keep it rolling, she better have the money behind her now, because if she's goes back to the well a second time, the well is going to be dry. Thank you.

MR. OTT: If everybody can just do me a favor and just stand up for a minute. Doug Wilsman, Jim McKim.

(Recess.)

MR. WILSMAN: My name is Doug Wilsman. I'm on the water board. I've been there since 1992 when we still had our own fire department here. In fact, I was one of the prime movers to get CDF to take over our fire department. I think we have a lovely fire department. I hope we get to keep it just like it is. And the trouble I have, our president was already here to address the people here and
the audience. I understand there's a CD of the Power Point; is that right, Shirley?

MS. ANDERSON: We can get you one.

MR. WILSMAN: Have you ever been recorded, your talk on the Power Point? It would be very helpful. This stuff is so complicated even if you follow it. It's a moving target. It changes all the time. If you notice the Power Point said Ramona was in Phase 1, three or four times before they said it wasn't. And it just recently got out and now I'd like to -- if that man could give me a copy. How did you obtain that copy? Is it on the internet

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MR. OTT: Let me answer a few of those questions. All legislation is on the internet. Leginfo is the California web site (Leginfo.Ca.gov), in the State. If you would go to that web site, there's a feature for California law.

You can type in author or bill number and you'll be able to get that bill (SB 806). Also, if you want to read about the bill, if you log onto LAFCO's web site, sdlafco.org, there's a March 5th legislative report that's posted on our web site. That bill plus a dozen other bills that we are tracking are on our web site. There's a couple of different ways of viewing that.

Let me just comment about the provision in SB 806 regarding the schools. You do have to read the bill carefully. There is a provision in there that says that tax monies amounting to one percent, it's actually one percent of the one percent, so that would be 1/100th, which equals
probably somewhere around 30 million dollars. We're going to find out more about that as that bill goes through the legislature. We may find out a little bit more Monday morning when Supervisor Jacob discusses the bill as a member of our commission. But there is also a provision in the bill that does say that the amount that would be removed from the school districts would be returned to the school districts from the state general fund, so there is that provision in the bill and it's a very important point to make. Supervisor Jacob would not be supporting advocating that bill if that provision was not there.

Why don't you continue.

MR. WILSMAN: Okay. Thank you. I thought Shirley's presentation was the best one I've ever seen. It was really wonderful. The problem is my memory is not good enough, so it would be nice if -- can I just make a request now that you mail me to the water district a CD of that Power Point.

MS. ANDERSON: Yes.

MR. WILSMAN: I don't have much to say except that I'm curious as to what degree if we wait until April 6th to write you something, whether that will have any impact on anything?

MS. ANDERSON: That's our deadline date. We would like those comments in and that facilitates our own internal process, that we can analyze them and incorporate them into the recommendations to the Commission. If you get them in later than that, there's a chance they could be left out, so we're asking get them there by the 6th.
MR. WILSMAN: Thank you very kindly. And I'm glad to see all you people showed up. I hope some of you are from Ramona.

MR. OTT: Thank you. Jim, you're next.

MR. McKIM: My name is Jim McKim. I'm from the Elfin Forest Harmony Grove area. This is represented by CSA 107. I was a firefighter on the department for 15 years and served on the fire advisory board there, but now I'm speaking as a resident and a citizen. I appreciate LAFCO's objectivity in this study and I understand what you're trying to accomplish showing the costs and the governance and those are the two things that I'm going to mainly touch on which Shirley emphasized also. I view the costs as being for the cheapest plan being not 22 million dollars short, but 31 million dollars short. And the reason I say that is that I have no confidence at all that the County will continue the Fire Enhancement Fund. The County has a track record of reactionary politics. This has only happened in the last two years, gee, right after the Cedar Fire. It's not written in law anywhere. Twenty something years ago they just decided to get out of the fire protection business and dumped it on the local residents. Very poor track record, so I think it's 31 million dollars short. In light of that, I don't see how we can view this kind of program as anything but hysterical optimism. There's no magic wand that's going to come up with 31 to 40 million dollars to achieve the staffing levels.

As far as the governance goes -- as far as the four
proposals in the governance, I think the County proposal is

the least viable, again because of their track record. They
have no experience over the last 30 years of fire
protection. And am I misstating something? I know there's
a county fire marshal, like one to serve the whole area, no
administrative experience. I view the fire protection
district as being the most viable of the four, but I have
one major problem with that is if you see that
organizational chart that was presented in the proposal, I
view that as very top heavy compared to what these
organizations are operating on now. There was one whole
side of that that was considered support staff, there was
finance and all that.

In our service area -- in our CSA 107 and Elfin
Forest Harmony Grove Fire Department incorporated, which is
a private non-profit corporation, has a contract with the
County to serve CSA 107. Many of those services are
provided by volunteers or people who are willing to do it
for some pay but a lot less than what a professional with
all their overhead would charge to do those things.

And touching on what somebody mentioned of seeing a
lack of economy of scale, I see it going almost the
opposite direction, lots of overhead to administer, and the
actual hands-on, you know, front line people are still
basically the same.

Regarding the level of service, I asked about what
the station staffing was to get a better understanding of
that. I view this as LAFCO staff, it's my understanding,
has decided that the level of service would be what was
going to be presented or what is presented in this proposal;
is that correct?

MS. ANDERSON: It's by the Commission. The levels
five and six were selected by the Commission.

MR. McKIM: What is the Commission?

MS. ANDERSON: LAFCO. Not the staff, the
Commission.

MR. McKIM: So LAFCO top level decided, okay.
That represents a greatly increased level of
service for many of those residents in those areas. I
understand that you don't want to decrease the level, but
for a vast majority of the residents in that area that's a
greatly increased level of service and which is reflected in
the greatly increased costs. There's no magic here.

My question, it's a rhetorical question, is are the
citizens that are being represented by those representatives
on LAFCO really asking for, demanding that level of service?
I live in a rural area. I have accepted that. And there's
trade-offs for living in a rural area and one of these
trade-offs that I accept as a resident is a decreased level
of service in varying degrees or varying aspects including
fire and EMS protection. And I know from personal friends

that live out in Earthquake or Shelter Valley, areas like
that, right out here east of Ramona, they are living there
for reasons and those reasons have -- in their mind have
trade-offs and they are personally willing to accept some of those things in lieu of paying higher taxes or assessment fees.

So I see if this program is going to go forward at all to fund that major shortfall, it is up to those citizens to make those decisions about whether they are going to be willing to pay assessment fees, increased taxes. I realize we've got Prop 13 to limit the taxes. They are going to have to decide to pay assessment fees to make up the difference, which is what the residents of CSA 107 have done. And if they don't do that and this program goes through, I see a big inequity between different areas, areas that have decided to pay it and areas that don't have it and somehow they get equal areas of service.

Touching on the career versus volunteer situation. I appreciate that there are people in the room here that are one or both simultaneously, concurrently, or at different histories in their life have been one or the other. I don't have any agenda of volunteer versus career at all. What I do know is that managing a joint career volunteer station is very difficult. It's been shown to be difficult across the country. Places that are successful at it had a long history of volunteers. And like one of the chiefs was here from New Jersey, they started all volunteers and they grew to places and then some of them decided to be paid. So they got this history that has a foundation form and they are managed on a local level to get that blend working.

If this is pushed through out at a high level of a regional fire protection district or one of the other plans,
all that decision-making is going to come up from above and it's going to come down on people who are not going to be happy with the way it's executed and you're going to lose the volunteers. Even as local of a level of San Marcos, which is a fire protection district, I believe, they had a volunteer program started in the '50s up in the '70s, that is completely gone away now. There's no active functional volunteers in San Marcos and it shows. So the thing that you're going to be able to maintain it with very little management, I think it's just again hysterical optimism.

In light of all that, I think the money would be better spent on some of the other issues that speakers touched on that this program doesn't address which is communication systems, joint training, maybe BLS only, that as we talked about like the 95 percent of the calls are BLS, don't require a captain, don't require a training engineering, they're all getting higher salaries than the EMT that's on a BLS unit. So if we're going to try to address the majority of the calls that are being created in this area, geographical area that we're talking about and provide an increased level of service for people that's going to have the most effect, I think staffing some kind of BLS program rather than structural fire protection would have more benefit to them. I think reality is that in most of these areas out here a structure fire is enough distance away from even the best staffed station that most of them are going to burn to the ground. And as people found out in the big one, Cedar Fire, it doesn't make any difference how
many you have. Harmony Fire, it went right through our
area. It wouldn't have made any difference how many people
we had. That fire went through in just a matter of two
hours or less to cause the majority of the damage.

So I think instead of looking at a program that's
structural fire protection and BLS, those staffing levels,
to rethink it and look at BLS service which is going to be
more benefit to people.

As a resident of CSA 107 I request that CSA 107 be
removed from Phase 1. I think for a couple of reasons; one
is that we are funded and a majority of those other
districts. And two, it is a geographical island compared to
those other districts. I think Frank actually touched on
that little bit. You can see it clearly on one of those
maps. There is a yellow area surrounded by pink. Our goal

for CSA 107 is to work with our surrounding areas for
communication, training, response, mutual aid, all those
kind of things, and we function much better working with
them, and maybe a joint agreement with Rancho Santa Fe or
something, rather than being part of a rural fire protection
district or CSA 135. Thank you.

MR. OTT: Our next speaker is Angus Tobiason.

Angus, it's your turn and you're from Ramona.

MR. TOBIASON: Sixty-nine years I've lived in
Ramona. I've been on the planning group for 28 years. And
at this time I would like to invite the Ramona Fire
Department through the water district to assist us in our
regional 20/20 plan if we need a fire protection plan. At
this moment we have 417 houses are being clustered on the
edge of the Clevenger Canyon, Highway 78, which is less than a quarter of a mile from those houses. They're going to burn on an easterly windy day and an accident in Clevenger Canyon the fire will be burning on those houses before the fire department gets its first ring. We need help. I've been listening here that the bureaucracy already is too -- or Governor Gray Davis appointed a lady fire chief that had never been on a fire to direct the California Division of Forestry. Then the Cedar Fire started coming. She said don't let any fire truck go down a road that doesn't have an outlet. This stopped all the fire trucks from going down

Mussey Grade, 50 or 60 houses burnt. I live down there. We lost two houses and two shops and we had 10 hours' notice before the fire came. We called in five water trucks. We called in two dozers and then the police chased everybody out. There was three fire trucks sitting on our road and they were not able to take a fire hose off the thing. My son went up said, "Oh, my dad is down here, come down quick," so one of the fire trucks went down. And they said, "Oh, the fire is on your cabana, it's in your garage, there isn't a damn thing we can do. Sorry, we're not supposed to even be down here because the director from San Francisco said no fires."

Another problem that we have in our community is our open space policy. The County now has got a plan for if you have 10 acres and you want to build a house, they said build your house down in the corner along the road here on this one acre of the ten. The rest of it we're going to
hold you up, we're going to condemn it as open space. And then they said we want to have a hundred foot -- or you're allowed to clean the brush on your property 100 feet away from your house and everyone of you know, you see the fire jump over 395 and over 15 and this 700 feet is not too close to protect a house. If you own the damn property, you ought to be able to go there and clear the brush away from it and it ought to be up to you people to go after the environmentalists and say, hey, these people are paying the taxes on it, they should be able to clear two or three or 500 feet away. If you're living on a steep hill, there isn't no way that a fireman can stand between the fire coming up the hill with 40, 50 feet flames and try and protect your house. They just have to say so long. Now we've got our new plastic windows. A fireman was telling me last night that the -- when one house catches on fire, it melts the plastic windows and they all fall and the next house catches right on fire. And they're so bunched together in this clustering zone to protect the area that is making this area just almost indefensible. Thank you.

MR. OTT: Thank you. Our next speaker is Jacqueline. And then if I can ask the following speakers to come up to the front, Jim Depolo, hopefully I got that right, Randy Scales, and David Osuna, and that will conclude everything tonight.

Jacqueline, why don't you just state your name again for the record.

MS. ARSIVAUD-BENJAMIN: Hello, my name is Jacqueline Arsivaud-Benjamin of the Elfin Forest Harmony
Mr. Ott: I think that question was posed or at least the answer was provided in Pine Valley. The answer is yes. You can vote it in, you can vote it out. It's also my understanding, and maybe there are some representatives here that can elaborate, but it's also my understanding that if an assessment has been voted in, that it isn't a requirement that the Board of Directors of a special district actually impose it. They have the legal authority to do so, but they can choose to not levy it. Is that correct, Larry?

Mr. Jackman: Yes, it is correct. But at this point the Board of Supervisors has to approve it.
to tax ourselves anymore, we wouldn't have the ability to do

MR. JACKMAN: We can take it as far as the Board and then the Board of Supervisors has to approve it or not approve it.

MS. ARSIVAUD-BENJAMIN: But there is a process to formally trigger a vote.

The second question I have is one that came up last night at our meeting is the notion of the responsibility and eventual liability of the County should our ISO rating or, let's put it, our level of service go down. Currently most of us in Elfin Forest are at a level four, I believe. I understand it's not possible to predict at this point exactly what it would be, but let's say if it was to become something less than that, certainly the immediate impact on residents would be an increase in our insurance rate and as such would the County be liable in the sense that they would be changing the funding and structure of an existing organization and imposing something new that might bring a detriment to the local populous?

MS. ANDERSON: I'll give it a stab. The assumption here is that the County has been awarded the successor agency?

MS. ARSIVAUD-BENJAMIN: Exactly.

MS. ANDERSON: Okay. Again, whatever successor agency, regional fire protection district, County, CSA, the
policymakers, Board of Supervisors, elected officials of the SSP would be making all program decisions, funding decisions, whatever. If it's the result your ISO ratings in a specific area went down because they messed up basically, I mean, our entire democratic system is based on the voters have to go after their policymakers. To my notion right now, and I may be going out there because I don't have the legal research to substantiate this, there isn't any mechanism that would trigger for liability because your ISO went down. I mean, you need a new elected body.

MR. OTT: Jim Depolo.

MR. DEPOLO: Thank you. It's Jim Depolo, D-e-p-o-l-o, and I'm a resident of Elfin Forest. I am not on the fire board. I am not a volunteer fireman. So you heard lots of people speak tonight that have much greater knowledge than I do in all of these areas; however, I wanted to come up here and say a couple of things that I've heard and first to thank you, LAFCO, the staff, and everyone who worked on this report. I know you guys are trying to take Measure C, you're trying to do the best you can to improve things. I happen to serve on the school board. I know it's not easy to try and improve things. I really admire what you're doing and I really appreciate the fact that you've had these community forums to listen to people.

One of the things I'll tell you from the school standpoint, I know people are concerned, so despite all the language and everything that might be in there that it will be replaced by state general fund, the last time I checked...
the state general fund wasn't real flush with money either.
It does concern schools just as a matter of principle.
The other thing, you've heard a lot input from the very concerned and intelligent people here tonight. The thing that I kind of heard that I think as you go forward and you need to consider is what is the problem that we're trying to solve. We're trying to improve service throughout the entire county, but there's all sorts of different fire districts that are involved in that. You got your Phase 1 and your Phase 2, maybe you need to look at them even a little bit differently than that, you know, which districts belong in each phase. I know that Elfin Forest, and I support that, would like to be at least pushed into Phase 2 because of service that we have. I think understanding the issues of the Cedar Fire and what happened, you know, the communication issues I've heard a couple of times here, you know, is what we're proposing to do actually going to fix that issue? I mean, are we addressing the issues that really will be increasing the level of service? So I would ask that you just, you know, listen to the things about communication, joint training.
I thought it was a very interesting point that somebody brought up about land management and fire trails and are we doing a good job in keeping those things up. I mean, how can we help ourselves better be prepared for a fire?
I think it's a very interesting point about labor unions and how that affects volunteers working together. I think we have a tremendous resource of our volunteers here.
and what we use. I think you need to really carefully look at that. I would hope that paid firemen or volunteer firemen, you know, there might be political issues in a fire station one day, but when there's a fire, you know, people that go into this line of work, I believe, do it because they're trying to help people, they're trying to save lives. I would hope that that certainly wouldn't make the difference when, you know, there's a fire like the Cedar Fire, I wouldn't think whether you're a paid fireman or a volunteered fireman, everybody is out there helping, trying to do the best to protect life and property. Maybe I'm wrong. I know in schools people go into it because they really want to help kids, they want to help educate. It's not always about the money and what you get paid, although it doesn't come initially I understand. I would encourage you not to lose the great resources that you have here in the volunteers that you have set up.

Money is an interesting one. I know, you know,

we're trying to build a new school and, you know, we can design them and we can do all these things and then there's that money of how should you pay for it. I don't know what to tell you on that one other than good luck. Everything that you put up there on your slides and said assuming funding, I mean it was a recurring theme. Obviously to put a plan in place and not have the funding is detrimental to everybody.

So I would just like to reiterate that I wish you luck. I appreciate what you're doing and I hope that you
can take a look at some of the districts and put them in Phase 2 is what we would like you to do. So thank you very much.

MR. OTT: Thank you. Randy Scales.

MR. SCALES: My name is Randy Scales. I represent CDF firefighters. There's no questions for the board here. It's more a clarification for some of the organizations. There seems to be a big misconception that if CDF comes in, that the volunteers are going to go away. That's not true at all.

Recently we just transitioned San Diego Rural which has 11 stations which only one station was a permanent full-time station. They had 11 employees, 10 of them came to work for us as paid employees. The other station that they opened in Descanso and that station was a complete volunteer station. The volunteers still come and work at that station with us with the paid personnel. We have two permanent paid people on every day at that station supplemented by at least one volunteer every day. Whether you call them volunteers, reserves or Explorers, they aren't getting paid to be there so they're volunteering their time. We call them reserves in San Diego Rural, okay. They come to work with us every day. They train with us. They get the opportunity to go to the State sponsored training classes that CDF puts on and they're treated just like a State employee that's a permanent paid employee.

If you look historically at the contracts that we have here in San Diego County, Valley Center, Deer Springs, Ramona and now Rural, they all still have reserves,
volunteers or Explorers as part of their organization. None
of them have gone away over the years.
Currently in San Diego Rural we have around 40
reserves that just supplement the two stations that have the
paid staff. The other volunteers still serve those
communities in which they live and work in and they are
still an adequate part of that program. We do have
volunteer training manuals that we train out of with them.
We have volunteer training days set up during specific days
of the week and we also train with surrounding communities
that are volunteered out in those areas.

It seems that there's a big concern, and rightfully
so, that the volunteers will be phased out. And I'm just
here to tell you that that is not true. Riverside has a
huge county contract with CDF and that a lot of those
communities don't have volunteers or reserves anymore, but
it's not because of the lack of interest or that they pushed
them out. As your communities grow and become cities they
transition those folks into paid permanent positions and the
volunteers will either continue to come back and staff those
engines behind the permanent personnel when they go to large
incidents or they still staff those additional engines
behind the permanent personnel on a regular basis.

So my only concern is that there's a lot of
comments that we've pushed the volunteers out and I'm just
here to tell you that that's not true. Thanks.

MR. OTT: We have about five minutes to go. We
have two speakers, David Osuna and then Virginia.
MS. OSUNA: Good evening. My name is David Osuna. I'm the assistant fire chief of Pala Reservation Fire Department. I'm also the volunteer fire chief of San Ysabel Reservation Fire.

My question to the panel is in your report, first three paragraphs, you mention that you worked with tribes. Throughout your report Power Point I never seen tribe one mentioned. I'm just curious why out of the 28 reservations in Southern California, 18 are in San Diego County, currently nine have fire departments that are paid with new equipment, certified personnel, with state fire marshal, and I don't know if the County is aware of that. It seems like on the big picture we have a government-to-government relationship with everybody, but on the ground when you start talking about this we're not mentioned, we're not recognized, and I'd like to know why? What is your plan going to -- your big scheme across the board going to do for the tribes? There are a lot of tribes that don't have fire departments at all in these rural areas, you know, what are you doing for them or did you contact them? There is an organization is the county, Southern California Tribal Chairmen Association, which has chairmen from all these tribes belonging to it, you know, did you contact them?

So I just want to know what other information you guys pursued or researched? You have all the volunteers covered. I know a lot of these guys from my early career working in Julian as a seasonal, so most volunteers in my area, San Ysabel, Julian, in that area, get along well with
MR. OTT: Thank you. Let me tell you how we have dealt with the tribes. The tribal authorities are in a sovereign status. We do not have control over their fire departments. They're boundaries as tribal entities, and therefore, they're not a direct part of this Micro Report that we've prepared. In some of our earlier reports we have discussed the inter-relationship in San Diego County with the tribes, with military organizations, with federal, state forestry departments. But we are focusing here on local government, on special districts, and that is the primary reason why they're not a part of this plan.

Obviously there's an inter-relationship between all fire agencies in this county and it's something that whatever successor agency, if one is selected, will have to deal with, but that is the reason.

We've also notified the tribal authorities in the county about our process and included them in our review. There, I believe, is also a tribal entity represented on our task force on fire protection. Is that correct, John?

MS. ANDERSON: There's a fire district, a tribal fire district association and John and I have met with them.

And early on --

MR. OSUNA: Who, I've never heard of it?

MS. ANDERSON: We had some joint meetings with the
And, also, if you look in the Micro Report there is correspondence specifically requesting that tribal lands be not included. That's not an option anyway as Mike has just said, separate set of jurisdictions, and LAFCO or the County has no authority over the tribal lands, so that's why they're not addressed in Micro Report.

MR. OSUNA: I'm curious how the first report talks about how you talked to everybody. I mean, you should have just excluded us in the report altogether. It's a little misleading.

MS. ANDERSON: We'll try to make that clear. Thank you.

MR. OTT: Our final speaker, Virginia.

Identify your name for the record and then you can proceed with your comments.

MS. McMANUS: Virginia McManus, M-c-M-a-n-u-s, and I'm from Elfin Forest and I'm very fire phobic, so when the firemen hop in their cars, drive down that road, I go lock up and leave. I do not like fire. I just seem to have been born that way. And so I admire the skill, tenacity, willingness to put themselves in harm's way and all the people who are so dedicated to serving others including the committee. I have a concern that before we know it, we're trying to find which group we need to be with to survive the reorganization or which strategy should I use to survive.
this. Fighting the fires should be the issue. Stopping the fire, preventing the fire has to remain the issue. And at some level I'm starting to feel like we're shifting the chairs on the deck of the Titanic. I'm going to put my chair here, but the boat is sinking. And I do wonder the state support, forestry management, the fire break issues, water, access to water, the parks and recreations. I don't want a trailhead to be a part of blocking a fire truck. And I think the big picture has to come along with all our concerns and perhaps that's less than another way that I'm unaware of, but should we be contacting the state? Should we be contacting our representatives, the governor? And should we be demanding more for ourselves to prevent, manage the forest, prevent fires, support the staff that's willing, volunteer and fully paid and get on with it? But let's not just rearrange the chairs.

And I'm concerned about DPLU. I don't know them. They have not spoken that I'm aware of. If they have answers, where are they? And there's a missing part of this process that concerns us and I think it gives us reason to be concerned. All of this effort, instead of -- we're communicating, but not about how to solve it. It's like I'm running, I'm going this way and I found an answer and we're staying the same. And the shift must be how do we prevent fire, how do we successfully fight fire, how do we manage

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background, of any size, rural or city, and let's not just
shift the chairs for the sake of looking like we've done
something. Thank you.

MR. OTT: All right. I think that's probably an
appropriate way to end this evening full circle fire
prevention to protection. It is 9:00. We do have a
commitment to vacate at 9:00. If there are any pressing
questions, you can ask them now but be very brief. I don't
see any. We thank you very much. March 7th is the next
date for the workshop downtown San Diego at 2:00 to 5:00.
Thank you very much for having us.

(Whereupon the meeting was adjourned at 9:03 p.m.)

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