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SAN DIEGO LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING
MARCH 7, 2007
2:00 P.M.

1600 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, ROOM 452
SAN DIEGO, CA 92101

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1 MR. OTT: Good afternoon, everybody. It will
2 be evening before we end.

3 We're going to start in a few minutes. I would
4 just like to remind all of you that we do have speaker
5 slips here for those that want to make some comments.
6 You should fill slips out so we have the proper spelling
7 and so forth of your name. If you don't have a speaker
8 slip, you can raise your hand. We'll bring one to you.
9 Also, in order for us to collect the speaker slips, you
10 can pass them to either side of the chambers, and we'll
11 pick them up for you.

12 I'll make some introductions, and we will begin
13 with the testimony part of today's workshop. So make
14 yourself comfortable. Also, on the pragmatic side, for
15 those of you that are parked in the two-hour zone, which
16 I imagine most of you are except for those that might
17 have come in on a bus, that two-hour provision has been
18 waived today. So don't worry about that.

19 So again, we're going to be starting in a
20 couple of minutes.

21 (The audience entered and was seated.)

22 MR. OTT: Well, it's getting very quiet here.
23 So I assume it's time to begin. My clock says 2:00.

24 My name is Mike Ott. And I'm the director of
25 LAFCO. Let me introduce the staff that will be
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2

1 participating in today's workshop. And then I'll also
2 make some additional introductions.

3 In back of me is Shirley Anderson. She's the
4 Chief of Policy Research of LAFCO. She is the principal

5 author of the Micro Report that is the subject of
6 today's workshop.

7 Sitting next to her is John Traylor, a LAFCO
8 consultant, as well as the Executive Director of the
9 Task Force on Fire Protection and Emergency Medical
10 Services.

11 Sitting next to him is John Goss, another LAFCO
12 consultant. And he's the author of Attachment 2, that
13 has the Ralph Anderson title on it, regarding governance
14 and volunteer issues. He's going to be saying a few
15 comments about that particular report.

16 We have Anne, who is taking a transcription of
17 today's meeting for all of you that are in the audience.
18 We will be posting on our website a full transcription
19 of the three workshops, the dialog that occurred at the
20 three workshops. That will be posted at our website.

21 We're still in the process of converting it to
22 English. I'm not sure how the transcription process
23 works. But it will be very effective in terms of
24 capturing everything that all of you have said
25 previously, as well as today. That will be on our
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1 website. It will be available. It has an important
2 packet for our commission that will be deliberating on
3 the subject.

4 A couple more introductions. Attachment 1 to
5 the Micro Report was produced by the Department of
6 Planning and Land Use. Ivan Holler, Ken Miller, and
7 Ralph Steinhoff are here. I'm going to be asking them

8 questions about that attachment, to give a highlight of
9 that report. We would appreciate that. It will
10 probably be in around 10 or 15 minutes.

11 Also in the audience from the Assembly office
12 of Kevin Jeffreys. Randy, where are you? Welcome.
13 It's very good to have you here. What part of San Diego
14 County -- I assume other counties does the Assemblyman
15 represent?

16 MALE SPEAKER: Riverside County and northern
17 San Diego County from the 8 freeway north.

18 MR. OTT: Okay, so two very fire-prone
19 counties. Thank you for being here.

20 Are there any other staff representatives from
21 elected officials here in the State Legislature? I
22 don't see any.

23 I'd like to introduce the Chairman of the
24 San Diego LAFCO, Andy Vanderlaan. He has the
25 distinguished position of holding the Chairmanship for
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4

1 two years now. It's really unprecedented. Usually, the
2 Chair position, as with all decision-making bodies,
3 rotates within the membership. But Andy has done such
4 an exemplary job over the past year, plus he has fire
5 background. He's the former Fire Chief of the North
6 County Fire District.

7 Is Bill Metcalf here, by the way? I don't see
8 him. Bill is, of course, the current Chief of
9 North County.

10 Andy was previously with the predecessor,
11 District of North County, which was a by-product of
12 consolidation. The Fallbrook Fire Protection District
13 and one of the County Service Areas served that
14 region. The consolidation actually resulted in the
15 dissolution of Fallbrook FPD and creation of the new fire
16 district, the North County Fire District.

17 So he's very experienced in not only fire
18 matters, but consolidation. So I'd like to turn things
19 over to some welcome remarks from our chairman.

20 MR. VANDERLAAN: Thank you, Mike.

21 I won't bore you with all the details of my
22 history. Mike's covered that. I don't think I got
23 elected the Chairperson because I was doing such a great
24 job. I think it has to do with a fire issue. And I'm
25 honored that the Commissioners felt that I'd be a good
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1 leader for this project.

2 There's also another former North County, aka
3 Fallbrook Fire Protection District member here,
4 Ralph Steinhoff. He was with the District for how many
5 years?

6 MR. STEINOFF: Thirty-one.

7 MR. VANDERLAAN: Thirty-one years.

8 I'll just say when I came to the County in
9 1976, I thought I was going to have an apprenticeship as an
10 assistant chief. That lasted two weeks. And then
11 things were going swimmingly until Proposition 13 passed
12 in 1978. I've gone through the wars with that.

13 I must say that it's must more pleasant to be
14 on this side than it is to be a presenter over here.
15 I'm sure many of you in this room have been a presenter
16 or have testified on issues before the Board of
17 Supervisors. And my heart goes out to you because it is
18 not a pleasant or an easy thing to do.

19 I must commend our staff for the report, the
20 quality of the report, and also for these meetings.
21 This is the third one that's being held. And with --
22 the fact that we have a court reporter so everything --
23 you can forget my words. But the other words and
24 comments are being recorded. I think that's important.

25 I think it's also very important that you're
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6

1 very candid with your remarks. I missed the
2 Elfin Forest bus, so I had to drive myself. But thanks
3 for the invitation. I appreciate that. So our staff
4 has done a great job in the manner in which they're
5 reporting and having these meetings to allow you to
6 comment.

7 Just a bit about our commission. I am the
8 Chairperson. I think I'm in about my, maybe, eighth or
9 tenth year of being on the commission. I must say at
10 this point in time, the commission is more together than
11 they have been in my tenure there.

12 In thinking about potential consolidation, I
13 also must comment that the Fire Service because, as you
14 may well know, the Micro Report that we're going to be

15 hearing about today was really a result of the Fire
16 Districts and the Fire Chiefs Associations coming
17 together and putting together what was called a
18 Substantially Similar Proposal. Without that we'd be on a
19 different track. The commission had an upside-down
20 version of what we're going to be talking about today. So
21 my compliments to the Fire Service for that as well.

22 Back to the commission. It's one of those
23 things -- once again, in my tenure here I thought that,
24 coming from Orange County, that San Diego County was
25 long overdue for some sort of a consolidated fire,
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7

1 emergency, medical agency. Of course that didn't occur.

2 When we fast forward to where we are today, I
3 think, with things that are in place right now, the
4 County, as an example, has about eight and a half
5 million dollars into fire and EMS. I think the fire
6 districts and the Fire Chiefs Association are closer
7 together. The fact that you're here and have a strong
8 interest in this report bodes well for the future.

9 So I think that when you consider we're coming
10 off of the most recent fires, which has put a major
11 emphasis on fire and emergency medical services, the
12 fact that a bill, SB-806, has been introduced by
13 Hollingsworth, that is a commitment that Supervisor
14 Jacob made to reallocate the property tax in San Diego
15 County.

16 Some say that the bill is dead-on-arrival. It
17 would allocate one cent of every dollar. If you want

18 more information on that, you can contact Supervisor
19 Jacob. Those things are moving forward.

20 We're coming off the heels of Proposition C,
21 while not containing any funding mechanisms, certainly
22 indicated -- at least the public indicated -- that they
23 would like a new and hopefully improved Fire Service and
24 EMS delivery system in the county. It may come down to
25 the fact that we have to go back to those same people
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8

1 who voted yes for more money.

2 Just to sum it up, I think that the stage is
3 set. If there ever was a time that consolidation was
4 not only feasible but hopefully practical, I think it's
5 now. The manner in which those agencies come together
6 is really up to you and other folks in the county,
7 particularly from the fire side.

8 So my encouragement to all of you. I guess the
9 question is, what will happen? And that's really why
10 we're here, is to discuss that. So once again, be
11 candid. Get your comments in. The commission is
12 completely open-minded on this issue about the -- I think
13 they support the idea of consolidation. But the manner
14 in which it's going to happen is completely open.

15 I encourage you to talk to your Supervisors as
16 this thing moves forward. And the commission meeting is
17 tentatively scheduled for May the 6th, 7th -- excuse
18 me -- May the 7th. That date may move, depending upon
19 where we are with comments and the staff bringing the

20 report to us.

21 So bottom line, my encouragement is to stay
22 involved with the process. Make your comments clear.
23 Be strong in what you believe, how you think it should
24 work. We heard after 1978, when the legislature had our
25 destiny in their hands, if you don't want to have
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9

1 something I laid on the top of you, you better be part of
2 the solution. So I suggest you do that. Bottom line,
3 follow the money. Without the money, we're not going to
4 move much further than we are now.

5 Thank you.

6 MR. OTT: Thank you, Andy.

7 A few things before we begin: I mentioned
8 earlier, for those of you that are parked in the
9 two-hour zone, disregard that. You will not be ticketed
10 today.

11 We have speaker slips up here for those of you
12 that would like to speak. We apologize for the
13 formality of the arrangement, but it will facilitate the meeting.
14 This is the seat of the County government and
15 the location of our office and the final workshop that
16 we're holding. Feel free to roll up your sleeves and be
17 candid with your remarks. We want to hear from you.

18 We've taken a different approach of releasing the
19 LAFCO report. It does not yet contain specific recommendations.
20 There are many assumptions behind the direction we
21 are following. We are very open to receiving comments and hope
22 to hear from all of you. We want to hear from you. What you

23 have to say will make a difference, in terms of how our
24 recommendations will be structured.

25 And April 6th is the deadline that Shirley will
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10

1 be going over in a few minutes, as the written comment
2 deadline for the public and the agencies to give us your
3 opinions, comments on the Micro Report. And that will
4 be incorporated into a hearing document.

5 If I could see a show of hands in terms of
6 people that have not been at either the Pine Valley or
7 Ramona workshop. A number of you. Okay. I was going
8 to offer a suggestion that I can be a little briefer
9 with my remarks, rather than going over the same thing
10 that I went over at the other workshops. But in lieu of
11 about half of you not being at previous workshops, I'll
12 go over the same information.

13 For those of you that don't know about LAFCO,
14 it's a State-chartered agency that works as a
15 legislative arm of the State Legislature. It carries
16 out broad mandates and legislative intent, policy. It
17 is not like a planning commission that weighs evidence
18 and is often defined as a quasi-judicial agency or
19 quasi-legislative.

20 We deal with some broad legislative
21 declarations that originated from Sacramento. And those
22 are carried out and implemented at the local level here
23 in San Diego, implemented in varying ways, but with the
24 same mandate and 57 other counties in California.

25 Who sits on LAFCO? You heard from our

1 Chairman, Andy Vanderlaan. He's a public member. He's
2 not affiliated with the City or special districts. He
3 is a Fire Chief, and he represents the public at large.
4 He's one-eighth of our commission.

5 There are seven other primary members that
6 represent County government. We have the Board of
7 Supervisors represented on our commission, two members
8 from the Board, Supervisors, Jacob and Horne.

9 We also have three City representatives on our
10 commission that are appointed by their respective
11 authorities (City Councils). In one case, the
12 City of San Diego has a permanent seat on
13 LAFCO due to special provisions in State Law.

14 There are also special districts represented on LAFCO.
15 I know, looking at the audience, that there are a number
16 of independent districts that represented here today.
17 Independent districts are governed by elected boards
18 of directors. Currently, there are 63 independent districts
19 in the county. These include fire districts, water districts,
20 fire districts, etc. These districts are responsible for
21 appointing 2 members to LAFCO. Again, those district members of
22 LAFCO are selected by their respective appointed authorities.

23 So if you do the arithmetic, I think I've
24 covered all commissioners. There are eight members. Those
25 are my bosses. I'm an independent employee. I'm not a
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1 County employee, as are the folks sitting in back of me.
2 They are not County employees. They are employees of
3 LAFCO. And the legislature intended us to be autonomous
4 from all levels of government that we regulate, whether
5 that be County, City, or Special District.

6 So that, I think, covers at least a little bit
7 about LAFCO. What I'd like to do now is, before I turn
8 things over to Shirley, is to let you know that the
9 podium, unfortunately, is to the back of us. When we
10 get to the public part of the workshop, that will be
11 where you should come up.

12 I'll probably call you in groups of three or
13 four so that we can do this as judiciously as possible.
14 We'll have you seated who are waiting for those that are
15 next up. The reason why we have the speaker slips is
16 not for formality. It's so that our transcriber can get
17 the name, spelling, and affiliation correctly attributed
18 to you. And, again, the transcriptions will be posted on
19 our website (sdlafco.org).

20 So, at this point in time we're going to do a
21 PowerPoint presentation. Shirley will be beginning with that.
22 There will also be other parts in the presentation which
23 will start after Shirley is done.

24 MS. ANDERSON: The Micro Report was released
25 several weeks ago. And if you haven't seen it, this is
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13

1 what the cover looks like. And this is where you can

2 get a copy. It's on our website with all the
3 attachments.

4 There are two attachments -- a number of
5 exhibits in the Micro Report and two attachments. The
6 first is a proposal by the County. And the second is an
7 addendum of research reports by Ralph Anderson and
8 Associates on all important volunteer efforts and fire
9 protection from other counties.

10 We have a brief timeline here that explains
11 how we've gotten to this point. About two years ago in
12 February, the commission, in a cooperative move
13 between LAFCO and the Board of Supervisors, initiated a
14 reorganization of virtually every unincorporated area
15 fire protection agency.

16 In August of the same year according to
17 procedures that are adopted by LAFCO, the Fire Chiefs
18 Associations and the District Fire Chiefs Associations
19 jointly put together a proposal that supplanted the
20 original reorganization proposal.

21 What has become known as the SSP, which stands
22 for Substantially Similar Proposal, basically took all
23 the agencies in the original reorganization and
24 segregated them by criteria that was developed for the
25 SSP into two phases. What we're looking at now is
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14

1 Phase 1. Phase 2 would be sometime in the future, after
2 we've resolved all the issues with Phase 1.

3 In December of '05 after the commission, LAFCO,
4 accepted the SSP, a Macro Report was released by LAFCO

5 staff and approved by the commission. The LAFCO report
6 reviewed several options for providing service in the
7 unincorporated area and opened many more questions about
8 the details of how this would happen.

9 The commission adopted the Macro Report and
10 asked that a micro-level report be prepared. The
11 Micro Report addresses very specific services and very
12 specific criteria and was released, as I say, in
13 January, a few weeks ago.

14 We're in the public workshop phase, as you can
15 see right now. We've had three workshops, one last week
16 in Pine Valley, one in Ramona, one here tonight.

17 Written comments are due by April 6th. This is
18 very important. We want to gather comments in any form.
19 Written is certainly substantial from all agencies and
20 from the public. The hearing where the Micro Report
21 will go to the commission for their review and possible
22 approval is in May.

23 These are the agencies that are in Phase 1. If
24 you don't see your agency there, that's because it's in
25 Phase 2.

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1 There are seven Fire Protection Districts.
2 These are independently elected districts. They have
3 independent boards of directors.

4 There are six County Service Areas. A County
5 Service area is a County-dependent district. The Board
6 of Supervisors is the policy head of County Service Areas.

7 They all have advisory committees.

8 In the case of the CSAs, there are volunteer
9 agencies within the CSAs who actually perform the
10 service of fire protection and emergency medical
11 services. They have contracts with the County to
12 actually perform the service. In this way, they're
13 really no different than other contractors, say CDF, who
14 would be performing fire protection service.

15 There are four municipal water districts. They
16 are what we call multipurpose districts. The principal
17 acts that they were created under in the government code
18 or in the State codes allow for multiple functions. Not
19 all of them who have all multiple functions actively
20 practice them. They're called latent powers. And those
21 powers in the municipal water districts in San Diego
22 County are water, fire. And Ramona also has sewer.

23 In addition to these public agencies, there are 7
24 volunteer organizations. Warner Springs, the one on the bottom
25 is not presently providing service. There's a number of
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16

1 volunteer private organizations. They work under --
2 similar to a franchise, if you will. But they are
3 private organizations. They do not have the ability to
4 implement or collect property tax or special
5 assessments. Their revenue-raising sources are strictly
6 limited to private sources.

7 This is a map of what the distribution of these
8 Phase 1 agencies look like. It's yellow on the maps, so
9 it may be a little bit more difficult to tell. There's

10 two colors of yellow. The bright yellows are the
11 current districts. The faded yellow is about 950,000
12 acres of unserved territory. All of that territory in
13 all of the Phase 1 areas would be included in the
14 reorganization. The pink is the Phase 2 agencies. And
15 the gray, way off to the left, are cities, incorporated
16 areas.

17 So what does the Micro Report cover? Well,
18 there's a lot of details in there. It explains how
19 State law has restricted access to new or increasing
20 revenues. It reviews the revenues by multiple years. I'm
21 talking about 25- or 30-year effort to coordinate and
22 enhance local fire protection and emergency medical
23 services in the unincorporated area.

24 It points out an evolving County Enhancement
25 Program and how that has offered resources to the
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17

1 unincorporated area. It describes the difference
2 between Schedule A and plans for those who are not
3 familiar with it.

4 But, primarily, the Micro Report covered cost
5 estimates for 12 models of structural fire protection
6 and emergency medical services. And it reviewed
7 governance options for regional system. We'll look at
8 the first item there first: The cost estimates for 12
9 models of structural fire protection.

10 How did that come about? At the point where
11 the commission asked for a Micro Report, they selected

12 three levels of services that had come forward in the
13 Macro Report. And we want to look at this level of
14 services in a regional entity.

15 We're talking about creating a reasonable
16 boundary around the entire Phase 1. We'd like to see
17 what three on-duty, basic life support, advanced life
18 support would cost within this regional agency; not
19 within individual jurisdictions, but within the entire
20 agency.

21 These services, the original request was to be
22 provided by career volunteer. The commission then said
23 we also would like you to look at the same three levels
24 of service, provided by a combination of career and
25 volunteer. Let's see if there's a cost difference

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18

1 between doing it strictly career or with career
2 volunteer.

3 At the same time, let's look at another
4 delivery model. So CDF is the apparent delivery model
5 that is existing out there in the unincorporated area
6 now and others of the state. So the same model of the
7 same six numbers, six service levels, were applied with
8 having CDF being the service provider.

9 And there's the cost. The top level is all
10 career. The bottom part of the screen is career
11 volunteer. Yellow is local resources. Blue are
12 services provided by CDF.

13 As you can see, the numbers across the bottom
14 of the screen are lower than those across the top.

15 That's because of the significant volunteer component
16 within those numbers. And it begs the issue of what is
17 the value of volunteers. It's something that many
18 people have tried to put a cost component to.

19 We know that volunteer fire suppression is the
20 predominant mode of service delivery across the
21 United States. But it's very, very difficult to put an
22 objective cost to it. Because there are so many
23 elements of it that just do not lend themselves to this
24 sort of analysis.

25 We do know that the cost difference between our
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1 service models in the Micro Report, between those levels
2 of services provided by strictly career and provided by
3 career or volunteer, there's a difference anywhere from
4 \$14- to \$20 million. It really points to the
5 significance of the volunteer contribution in the
6 system.

7 At the same time, state law or consolidating
8 the districts do not extend to private agencies. And
9 that's what the volunteer agencies are. They're private
10 agencies. So the model would be that volunteer agencies
11 would continue to work in a cooperative environment,
12 exactly as they are now, and be incorporated as an
13 extremely important component of regional fire
14 protection service.

15 If we go back and look at our total cost, we
16 see that -- let me back up again.

17 Here's your lowest cost, the career volunteer,
18 44.8 million. And your highest is the four on-duty
19 delivered by CDF. So if we start looking -- excuse me.

20 If you want to know what these costs include, I
21 refer you to the Micro Report. Because there are
22 several pages of assumptions that allow you to
23 understand how these costs were developed. But they do
24 include total personnel compensation as the whole
25 package.

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1 And it was developed from median salaries
2 across this county, including all the cities also. So
3 that elevates the median.

4 It includes an overhead component. It does not
5 include one-time costs. Capital start-up costs were
6 estimated of the need to be about 37 to 47 million. And
7 the model projects those as being available at the point
8 of organization, not funded over time. That's the
9 modeling technique. Most people understand that the
10 money won't be in the bank the day that the
11 reorganization starts.

12 Very important assumptions for this is that it
13 is an integrated regional system. We're not looking at
14 how do we increase costs within Deer Springs or how do
15 we increase services in Deer Springs, how do we increase
16 services within East County Fire? No. The system was
17 taken apart and restructured according to geographic and
18 operational relationships, not jurisdictional lines.

19 Another very important component of this is

20 that no service would be reduced. The service across
21 the region now is quite varied. And those agencies that
22 have increased services, either because of efficiencies
23 or because they have increased revenues over other
24 agencies, would not see a reduction in their service
25 level. There would be some baseline of service across
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1 the whole region. But no service would be reduced.

2 Here's a map of how the jurisdictions were
3 eliminated and a regional agency was implemented. Costs
4 were all developed based on staffing these five
5 battalions.

6 Here's another chart, which I know you can't
7 see. But again, I'll refer you to the Micro Report. On
8 the right is a support staff. On the left, there's --
9 represents 400 or 500 positions, operations positions,
10 safety personnel. And embedded in there is a volunteer
11 coordinator to take care of that all-important volunteer
12 function.

13 So let's look at the resources that are
14 available out there. This is a snapshot in time. It's
15 probably changed already. This was '05/'06.

16 There's about 5.9 million in property tax that
17 is related to fire protection. There is more fire
18 protection revenue out there. There is an estimate of
19 what is related to fire protection and emergency medical
20 services.

21 Our multipurpose districts have property tax

22 that is related to water, to sewer. And formulas in
23 state laws are used to calculate how much of that property
24 tax would be attributable to fire protection and would
25 be transferred to a new agency. So that's what you come
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22

1 up with.

2 There's 8.2 million in voter-approved
3 assessments. This is an interesting figure. The voters
4 out there have approved more in assessments and special
5 assessments than there is in property tax. And there's
6 8.5 million in county fire enhancement. That's what was
7 allocated in '05/'06.

8 The county fire enhancement fund is a
9 program that was put forward by the County to support
10 fire protection services in the unincorporated area.
11 Again, 8.5 million was expended in '05/'06. The fund
12 grants new equipment. Probably the centerpiece of the
13 program is CDF contracts that placed Amador and assisted
14 in Schedule A contracts in some agencies.

15 The Micro Report looks at the revenue from the
16 county fire enhancement program in a very conservative
17 manner. It is not the same as the sustainable income
18 that we're looking at for property tax and special
19 voter-approved benefit fees. We're looking at it very
20 conservatively as a one-time fund for the purpose of the
21 Micro Report.

22 However, no one can disagree that it has
23 impacted the manner in which the fire services are being
24 provided. And it presents potential for income for this

25 region. So we go back again, and look at what we've put
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1 together. We've got a total here of 22.6 million in
2 '05/'06.

3 If we go back and pick up the least cost
4 service level, which was 5-A, which was three on at BLS,
5 and subtract from that the estimate of resources that we
6 had, we still come up short 22 million.

7 So we looked at the cost estimates and the
8 revenue estimates. And we'll look at now the governance
9 options for a regional system.

10 The governance options basically have to follow
11 some simple tests. It has to be a good governance
12 option for the service that we're talking about. Does
13 it have the statutory authority to provide the service?
14 Does it have -- would it provide the structure
15 throughout the service?

16 Is in some way the ability of a particular
17 governance option better than another to provide
18 funding? And, indeed, access to funding, as we all
19 know, is probably the principal test for which we'll be
20 looking at governance.

21 The four options for governance that are
22 reviewed in the Micro Report are the Regional Fire
23 Protection District, the County of San Diego as a
24 successor agency, County Service Area 135, and the
25 status quo.

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1 All of these four options are reviewed for
2 implementing the service levels that we've already
3 discussed, five, six, and seven. So a regional system
4 at the cost of 44 million for the lowest.

5 The first one, the Regional Fire Protection
6 District, is an independent special district voted in
7 by registered voters of the regional agency. There would be
8 11 members at elected at large, at least initially. The board
9 may be elected or appointed.

10 Eleven members is the largest amount of board
11 members as allowed by law under a Fire Protection
12 District. They would be voted in at large initially.
13 That is state law, also. There are options, for a later
14 date, having the district divided into divisions by area.

15 The volunteers would remain autonomous, as I've
16 explained. They would work cooperatively within a new
17 region, within a new entity, just as if they work
18 cooperatively for the entities out there now.

19 And the municipal water districts would not be
20 included in Phase 1. There are no provisions in state
21 law that would allow the fire function, which was the
22 original intent, to remove the fire function from the
23 municipal water districts. So municipal water districts
24 would not be included in Phase 1. Apparently put into
25 Phase 2 at this time.

1 The boundaries would enclose all the Phase 1
2 organizations, with the exclusion of the municipal water
3 districts, and approximately 950,000 acres of unserved
4 territory. The new board of directors, whoever would be
5 elected to this Fire Protection District, would set
6 policy, would set the level of service. So even though
7 we've illustrated different cost components, it is a new
8 elected board of directors that would set the service
9 level.

10 A Fire Protection District would inherit the
11 property tax and special assessment revenue of all the
12 dissolved districts. Transfer of property tax is
13 forthright in state law. It is transferred to the new
14 agency. The special assessment revenue of the dissolved
15 districts would be retained in zones where that special
16 assessment was collected.

17 In and of itself, creating a Fire Protection
18 District does not create access to new revenue. There's
19 nothing in state law that says if you form a Fire
20 Protection District, money flows from somewhere. You
21 still have to work to find it. So under that
22 constraint, the minimum Micro Report service level could
23 not be implemented without additional funding.

24 Remember, the minimum is 44 million. And the
25 estimate of, really, the resources available out there
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26

1 right now -- and we're not sure that all of that would
2 be available to a Fire Protection District -- are about

3 22 million.

4 The characteristics of a county program, this
5 would be the model if the districts were dissolved and
6 the County was named as successor agency to provide fire
7 protection services in Phase 1 of the unincorporated
8 area. The Board of Supervisors would be the policy
9 legislative head.

10 Second, first, and fifth districts, basically
11 the yellow, again, is Phase 1. And you can see the
12 fifth, second districts overlay most of Phase 1.
13 There's a little bit down there in phase -- overlay most
14 of Phase 1. And there's a little bit of supervisory
15 district in Phase 1 that overlays.

16 Again, just like an elected board of directors
17 for a Fire Protection District, the supervisors would
18 establish a service level and delivery mode. The
19 volunteers would remain autonomous and work
20 cooperatively with the system, and the municipal water
21 districts would not be included.

22 Property tax would be transferred to the
23 County. Property tax is generally deposited into the
24 general fund, just like the regional Fire Protection
25 District. Special assessment revenue needs to be
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27

1 retained in zones where it's collected and used only in
2 that area.

3 The County's fire enhancement program could be
4 implemented without delay on our County's assessment.
5 It would be implemented under a regional Fire Protection

6 District too, but this is just a more direct route.
7 Because they wouldn't be working cooperatively through a
8 regional fire district. It would be the County.

9 Just as an aside, part of the fire enhancement
10 program indicates that an office of fire warden may be
11 created. And that is not a function of LAFCO. That is
12 a function totally of the County and would be outside of
13 the reorganization.

14 Again, like a Fire Protection District, there
15 is no direct access to revenue. No revenue is created
16 as a function of naming the County as a successor
17 agency. There is, however, the potential to access
18 County discretionary funds. And that really should be
19 evaluated.

20 Again, the minimum level of service could not
21 be implemented without additional funding. No new money
22 is created by this. There is still 44 million required
23 to provide service level and about 22 million out there
24 in revenue.

25 The third option is CSA 135, County Service
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28

1 Area 135, is the 800 megahertz communication. It covers
2 the county and has a cooperative agreement with Imperial
3 County. So the cities are member agencies.

4 LAFCO could empower CSA 135 to provide fire
5 protection services. That would only be within a zone
6 that replicates the boundary of the Phase 1
7 reorganization.

8 Here's a map of CSA 135, the big yellow line
9 there, and the Phase 1.

10 Most of the characteristics of CSA would be
11 identical to naming the County as successor agency. The
12 Board of Supervisors would be the policy and legislative
13 head. Voter-approved assessments would have to be
14 retained in the zones where collected. There's no
15 direct access to new revenue.

16 But property tax in a CSA would not be
17 deposited in the general fund. Property tax would be
18 retained in discrete accounts earmarked for CSA 135,
19 specifically.

20 Characteristics of the status quo, continued
21 system of multiple underfunded districts and volunteer
22 operations. The implementation of the county fire
23 enhancement program, as I said, it is a fact now. It
24 can go forward.

25 What it does at this point is actually

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29

1 introduce partial de facto consolidation. Because
2 agencies are increasingly coming under CDF contract. So
3 they are consolidated under one service provider.
4 Again, the minimum Macro Report service level could not
5 be implemented without additional funding.

6 So we go back to our timeline to see where
7 we're at. Written comments, again, are due in April.
8 The hearing is tentatively scheduled for May. And as
9 Chairman Vanderlaan said, well, what can happen in May?
10 A lot of things could happen in May.

11 The commission can continue, of course, for a
12 month or two. The whole issue could be put aside
13 temporarily. If a Fire Protection District is approved,
14 there will be an automatic election. This is mandatory.
15 It's in state law. No option. Automatic election for a
16 Fire Protection District. That would be within
17 registered voters within the entire Phase 1 that was
18 being reorganized. That was the final boundary of
19 Phase 1 that was approved by the commission.

20 If other options were selected, there is the
21 possibility of an election. And the election requires
22 the protest of registered voters within agencies that
23 would be dissolved.

24 And that's not supposed to be there. That's
25 the end of the report. If you have any questions, if
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30

1 you need to see one of the slides again, we'll be happy
2 to review anything.

3 MR. OTT: Thank you, Shirley.

4 We have a few more components to the
5 presentation, which we will begin in a few seconds here.

6 After the Planning Department answers a few
7 questions we have regarding their attachment, and again
8 John Goss, ditto for him, we'll open this up to
9 questions regarding the presentation that was made. And
10 then after we exhaust any questions related specifically
11 to the presentation, we'll proceed with the speaker
12 slips.

13 So at this time, I'd like to have Ivan and his
14 team come up here.

15 What the question is, really, tell us about
16 Attachment 1, which is the conceptual reorganization
17 plan that was put together. The genesis of that plan,
18 for those of that you were not at the previous workshops
19 is this: LAFCO staff needed additional information,
20 elaboration on the direction of the county's fire
21 enhancement program.

22 We produced a questionnaire. That in turn
23 resulted in a response, which is Attachment 1. And I
24 think it would be helpful if Ivan went over it a little
25 bit, maybe five or so minutes.

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31

1 MR. HOLLER: Thanks, Mike.

2 Good afternoon. I am, again, Ivan Holler. I'm
3 a Deputy Planning Director in the Department of Planning
4 and Land Use. A couple of introductory comments, and
5 then I'm going to turn it over to Ralph and Ken. And
6 they'll follow up with some additional information.

7 With respect to the county report that's an
8 attachment to the Micro Report, I want to clarify a
9 couple things. Because I've heard a lot of comments
10 that aren't quite accurate. And so I would like to take
11 this opportunity to offer the clarification.

12 We were asked by LAFCO back on November 6th to
13 submit information to LAFCO about our program, the
14 program that's currently operating today. And we did
15 that, which included providing them a copy of a report

16 that we had assembled and also responding to a number of
17 other questions that came out of LAFCO.

18 And our program is, as all of you are aware at
19 this point in time, currently includes 8.5 million
20 dollars per year that the board has allocated out of the
21 general fund to enhance fire protection services in the
22 unincorporated area.

23 I know that originally there were a lot of
24 concerns over how that program -- how our program was
25 developed. And those questions came forward and were
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32

1 answered by our CAO, by Mr. Walt Ekard, at a board
2 hearing when this item, the first phase of that county
3 program, came to the board as to how it was developed.

4 So a lot of the concerns over the fact that
5 that wasn't developed with participation from a number
6 of the affected agencies were addressed directly by
7 Mr. Eckert. I'm not going to address them today because
8 he's already done that.

9 And then subsequent to that hearing, we had a
10 second phase that came forward with the board and a
11 public hearing. And the board adopted and approved
12 that. That brought the current total up to 8.5 million
13 dollars. And before that hearing, we did sit down with
14 the fire service and met with them. And they were
15 supportive of the proposal at that time.

16 There is a -- so the County fire program is
17 8.5 million dollars, as you heard Shirley referencing in

18 the program. There's a portion of that study that's at
19 this time not adopted. It's not on anybody's calendar.
20 It's a possibility. But it should remain just that at
21 this point in time. It's our idea for how this program
22 could be potentially expanded in the future. But it is
23 just that, future and possibility.

24 So right now we have an 8.5-million-dollar
25 program where we're allocating resources and also
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33

1 working with CDF, in terms of writing additional
2 contracts to include fire protection services.

3 That's the overview that I wanted to provide,
4 because I want to make sure that you all had a clear
5 understanding of how that came about. It's been in
6 place now for a couple years. So I'm going to turn it over
7 to Ralph and Ken, make some closing comments, and then
8 I'll give it back to Mike.

9 MR. MILLER: Thank you.

10 I'm Ken Miller, one of the fire services
11 coordinators for the County.

12 To give you some information about our existing
13 program, our existing program basically is targeting the
14 rural areas to help improve fire service in a number of
15 ways.

16 One of the areas we're looking at is our
17 particular program, as it exists today, is to develop
18 enhancement, based on what exists out there at this
19 point in time. One of the highlights that we looked at
20 was some CDF facilities that we've heard discussed over

21 the past couple of stakeholder meetings.

22 What happened is, back in '98 LAFCO recommended
23 that some of those resources might be considered to
24 improve the fire service. Because they actually exist
25 in the field today. They're operated. And maybe they
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34

1 could be something that could be built upon.

2 We took that direction at that point in time.
3 And what we've done is instituted ten Amador agreements
4 out there. An Amador agreement is basically an
5 opportunity to keep a CDF facility open that does
6 respond to all types of emergencies, it's just not wild
7 fires, during the winter period. So we have actually
8 funded that for a five-month period with basically
9 coverage behind that in the event they go into an
10 emergency. So that's the partnership we did out there.

11 Those ten stations are De Luz; Rincon; Miller,
12 in the Deer Springs area; Valley Center; Warner Springs,
13 where incidentally a volunteer fire station has folded;
14 Witch Creek, out in the Santa Ysabel, Ramona area;
15 Campo; Dulzura; the Boulevard area; and Potrero.

16 The other step that we did was to try to build
17 upon existing agreements that were in place and increase
18 staffing at some stations. What we did is offered some
19 increased staffing enhancements for the districts of
20 Deer Springs. We put an additional person on each
21 engine in their district seven days a week, 24 hours a
22 day. Likewise, we did the same in Valley Center.

23 We also were able to get some full-service
24 agreements for the first time in the communities of
25 rural Fire Protection District. We went from one
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35

1 station covered full time with career people to two
2 stations out in that area. We also have a signed
3 agreement with Pine Valley Fire District that we hope
4 will come to implementation sometime in June, where the
5 people are on the ground.

6 We also provided funding for the volunteer fire
7 companies out there in two ways. We offered operational
8 dollars to them, which basically doubled their budgets.
9 That's what we did out there.

10 We met with them as groups for three meetings,
11 then we met individually. We were able to fund money
12 their way so they could pay for such things as liability
13 insurance, workers' compensation, fuel, utility costs,
14 did those types of things for them.

15 The other benefit that we did for the volunteer
16 groups out there is, we looked at an aging fleet. The
17 fire service fleet and those volunteer fire communities
18 and some districts are aging. We had meetings. We meet
19 quarterly with those partners at this point in time. We
20 identified priorities with their input. And at this
21 point in time we've ordered 16 pieces of apparatus,
22 which is engines and water tenders. The first water
23 tender arrived today.

24 We also are planning to order three more
25 engines, probably this week. We've got the clearance to

1 do that. So we're actually putting equipment on the
2 ground that needs to be replaced today.

3 The one thing that we'd really like to let
4 everybody know is, we support the volunteer programs.
5 We have been supporting them in our program as is today.
6 We intend to support them in the future. They are an
7 integral part of our particular program. Without them,
8 we cannot make things function.

9 With this, I'll let Ralph identify some
10 specific establishments.

11 MR. STEINHOFF: I'm Ralph Steinhoff, Fire
12 Service Coordinator for the County of San Diego.

13 Currently, through cooperative agreements with
14 18 agencies, there are 42 fire stations under contracts.
15 We have agreements with all the CSAs and volunteers
16 except one. They are currently allocated through
17 partnerships in excess of 15 million dollars over the
18 last 18 months.

19 Of that \$15 million, \$9 million has gone
20 through contracts to enhance staffing and an excess of
21 \$9 million has gone to enhance fire apparatus
22 replacement and equipment.

23 We strive to bring forward sort of a
24 Southwest Airlines approach to this apparatus and
25 equipment so that it is simple yet functional. We've

1 tried to watch the pocketbook pretty close. And yet,
2 certainly, there are a lot of problems out there, but
3 the hope is that it's very functional.

4 We worked very closely with the partner
5 agencies to come to a determination to those regional
6 needs. And those regional needs and assets were
7 determined through those groups. And so that's how we
8 brought forward those listings of apparatus.

9 We also worked with the agencies. We found
10 that the run books back at these stations were severely
11 lacking. So, working with the agencies, we tried to
12 work through RGIS section. And we have brought forward
13 in excess of over 200 run books back to the engines so
14 that they actually have that in the engines so they can
15 actually find the parcels, addresses, and streets, which
16 is so vital to be able to do this job.

17 Through the partnership we've also brought
18 together some contract training officers through CDF and
19 working with other partners in the tribal nations where
20 they've brought forward and made available facilities.
21 And as we bring out there and work together
22 collaboratively to improve the overall training aspects.

23 We also have our staff individuals to assist
24 with grant writing, to assist the volunteers in striving
25 for grant funds.

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38

2 County was to look at the blue ribbon commissions
3 report, the task force on fire service recommendations
4 and to deal with some of those.

5 We have been looking at communications. We
6 have initiated much of the command and controls areas.
7 We have constituted improvements in training through the
8 collaborative effort of all, looking at mutual aid and
9 automatic aid agreements so that the closest units, not
10 just agency, could respond to an incident. Fleet
11 replacement, which is actively ongoing, to the
12 improvement of the resources, to enhance budgets, and to
13 reduce duplications of services.

14 The County has already addressed issues with
15 our fire codes. We've gone to the consolidated codes
16 and brought fire codes into the building codes. And
17 we've also instituted an enhancement of the overall
18 reorganization within the region.

19 With that, I'll hand it back to Ken.

20 MR. MILLER: The last item we wanted to brief
21 you on is the proposal. It's just a proposal. It's a
22 staff recommendation to LAFCO.

23 We are proposing for supplemental staffing in
24 specific districts. Borrego and East County are areas
25 that we're looking at doing some supplemental staffing.
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39

1 We're looking at full-service career station at
2 Warner Springs CDF, which gives a career facility out
3 there to work with the volunteer program. We're looking

4 at the possibility of an Amador agreement in the
5 Mount Woodson area. What that will do is help pick up
6 some unserved islands out there. So that year-round
7 coverage is our goal. We're also looking at providing
8 some minimal supervisory chief officer coverage to help
9 in the rural east and northeast portions of the county.

10 We're moving into developing a stipend program
11 to retain and train volunteers. That's a
12 one-million-dollar proposal. We're looking at trying to
13 provide an increase in operational and maintenance
14 elements for the volunteer program.

15 We're looking at a dispatch situation. I
16 skipped over one item. We're looking at moving into an
17 emergency medical dispatch. We have an item in there
18 for that service to improve dispatching in that area.

19 We are proposing that the CSAs be merged into
20 one large CSA. That's an option. We are looking at
21 basically letting the volunteer fire companies today
22 that do not get mitigation fees having an avenue to get
23 those fees.

24 We're looking to basically say that fire
25 districts don't have to be dissolved. It's an option.

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40

1 That's what our items identified in the summary of the
2 proposal, the recommendation.

3 And, again, this is just a proposal that comes
4 to 4.5 million dollars. It's not funded at this point
5 in time, as Ivan said.

6 The one thing that has come to our attention in
Page 37

7 the previous meetings is about El fin Forest.
8 El fin Forest is in the program as a County Service Area,
9 because LAFCO has it in the Micro Report. So we have a
10 placeholder in our organizational structure. It's in
11 there for that purpose so they can be part of that
12 system. If that changes, that's not a problem. That's
13 up to the LAFCO to deal with that.

14 Lastly, again, I'd like to conclude with we are
15 supporting volunteers today. We intend to support the
16 volunteer program with partnerships and full-time
17 departments. We think the program is going well, and we
18 hope it will continue.

19 Thank you.

20 MS. ANDERSON: We're going to ask our
21 consultant, John Goss, to give us a really brief
22 presentation on Attachment 2 that was in the Micro
23 Report. And it covers our emphasis on the volunteers
24 and also some review on governance issues.

25 MR. GOSS: Thanks, Shirley.

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41

1 First of all, just by way of background, for
2 15 years I was City Manager in Chula Vista. One of the
3 reasons I'm involved in this study is after that, I
4 became Assistant County Manager with San Bernardino
5 County with oversight of the County Fire Department.

6 And so while you were dealing with the Cedar
7 Fire here, I was dealing with our staff with the Old and
8 Grand Prix fires in San Bernardino County. We have a

9 county -- San Bernardino has a county fire department
10 that's made up of 32 distinct entities. And there's a
11 lot of lessons on what we did learn there.

12 Just so you know, John Traylor, former fire
13 chief in Coronado, and myself went to each one of the
14 24 Phase 1 agencies as a team to listen to
15 what your ideas were, let you know what we were
16 thinking. This was followed up by a couple stakeholder
17 meetings, one in Elfin Forest, one in Alpine in
18 November, in which we shared an update. And there's
19 been these public hearings, this one and the two from
20 last week in Pine Valley and Ramona. Part of the idea
21 here is to get the word out and also to get the input in
22 regarding this particular study that we've done.

23 The attachment that I did of 30 pages dealt
24 with governance, volunteers and lessons learned from
25 other counties. In terms of the governance, I think
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42

1 that's been pretty well covered in the basic report,
2 which is that the maximum allowed by the State law for
3 an elected board for regional Fire Protection District
4 is 11. And because of the size of the area being
5 covered, we're recommending that it be an 11-member
6 board, rather than, say, 7 or 9.

7 It was also suggested -- this is only a
8 suggestion, because of some things in our report that
9 are really like setting forth a road map for a Fire
10 Protection District, a regional Fire Protection
11 District, things that LAFCO cannot mandate. But we

12 certainly can suggest as part of our report. And that
13 is that there be an election subsequently to be able to
14 elect those board members by district or by division.

15 Also, the report suggests -- and I think this
16 is actually suggested as a condition, although there's
17 no real recommendations at this point in the report --
18 that there be advisory committees established.

19 As you noticed in the operational portion of
20 the report, five areas would be served. And one way to
21 approach that would be to have an advisory committee serve
22 each area. And each one of those operational areas,
23 if you think about it, if you head up a district with 11
24 elected members and you have elected members of the
25 Fire Protection Districts and their CSAs and you
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43

1 have the volunteer policy makers and 501 C-3s that run
2 the volunteer companies, you really have over a hundred
3 people that are involved.

4 And as policy makers, there are some who have thoughts
5 how services should be provided in their part of the
6 county. This would provide an opportunity for those
7 people who are not elected to the board who still have
8 an interest in the subject to have some input and
9 coordinate with a battalion chief who would be heading
10 up that area.

11 So anyway, that is the recommendation. There's
12 some advantages listed in the report, more details and
13 advantages of that. Also, in the governance area, we

14 looked at other options in a very general sense, to a
15 regional Fire Protection District, like a county fire
16 department or county CSA department or even contracting
17 with a larger agency like the City of San Diego. Those
18 were all mentioned generally in that report.

19 In terms of a comparable county analysis, we
20 took a look at four of them, some nearby like Riverside,
21 Orange, San Bernardino and then Sacramento. Because
22 they actually have an overall county or regional
23 department, a regional Fire Protection District.

24 So you have sort of a different examples of how
25 county services or how countywide services will be
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44

1 provided. You have a Fire Protection District, JPA.
2 You have one that would be CDF. There's
3 actually a fire chief in the County of Riverside. And
4 then you have San Bernardino, which is a county fire
5 department that's made up of a number of CSAs.

6 Some of the lessons learned, obviously in the
7 report that we just saw, one of the major lessons -- the
8 major lesson learned is that those counties have
9 revenues. This county does not. That makes all the
10 difference in the world.

11 One of the counties in their area has 11 cents
12 on the tax dollar. Another one has 13 cents. There's
13 really relatively speaking very little that is provided
14 by way of property tax revenue in the area that we
15 studied.

16 But there are also other lessons learned. And
Page 41

17 that is that the other counties have a much longer
18 history of dealing with this kind of fire service. They sort
19 of build up where they are now. And in that respect,
20 this county is kind of just getting started.

21 There's been a lot of stumbling along the way.
22 And, you know, now the issues that probably should have
23 been addressed years and years ago are now finally being
24 addressed. Not that they weren't addressed back then.
25 But now there may be some prospect of something
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45

1 happeni ng.

2 Second lesson learned is that there's no magic
3 organization arrangement for a successful fire service.
4 JPA, Fire Protection District, CDF, Local Resources,
5 they've all worked.

6 The other lesson learned is that the other
7 counties we've looked at use the same operational model
8 that we're proposing, which is basically creating
9 battalion or operational areas, in this case five.
10 We'll have anywhere from six to ten stations per area
11 under a battalion chief.

12 As far as the volunteers are concerned, you
13 know, really stress this, as Shirley has. And it's
14 important to support and nurture a volunteer program.
15 Because it's going to be much, much more difficult on a
16 Fire Protection District without the volunteer program.

17 The main plan itself has a full-time volunteer
18 coordinator suggested there. But there are also other

19 benefits, I think, to a regional Fire Protection
20 District or some kind of countywide system, which is
21 centralized recruitment, training, and administration.

22 And, you know, in terms of things that we can't
23 include, most likely as a LAFCO recommendation, but
24 certainly suggested rules of the road with the issues
25 such as volunteer stations having a full-time career
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46

1 firefighter, just one that would be there to provide
2 some continuity, but also provide training.

3 Because one of the things that we heard, John
4 and I, was that a lot of times the volunteer resource has to
5 leave the community in order to get training. This
6 would provide an opportunity for training and to retain the
7 volunteer resource in the community.

8 Also providing uniform training standards and
9 methods. Suggest that, instead of reinventing
10 the wheel, that a policy guide be developed for
11 volunteers involved in fire suppression and those that
12 volunteer administratively or in the policy area.

13 And one in Riverside County has been developed
14 over the years and certainly would provide something
15 that would be a good resource if a regional Fire
16 Protection District is indeed created.

17 And then, finally, we recommend, or at least my
18 report recommended, that incentives should be explored
19 such as stipends that would cover some of the costs and
20 expense to volunteers that are involved in providing
21 service. Training, liability insurance, other kinds of

22 insurance are other incentives. All these should be looked at.

23 In any case, those are some of the ideas. If
24 you didn't get a chance to read the attachments -- I
25 know the main report is long enough. And, once again,
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47

1 what we'd like here is your input.

2 Thank you.

3 MR. OTT: Thank you very much, John, as well as
4 Ivan, Ken, Ralph, Shirley, John. Everybody in the
5 audience too. Thank you, all of you.

6 We're going to be beginning with the
7 speaker-slip part of the presentation. Unless there are
8 any questions specifically related to what we've
9 covered. Why don't the two of you -- are there just two
10 hands? I see three -- two. Why don't the three of you
11 come around over here.

12 State your name for the record. And if it's a
13 difficult name to spell, spell it so that we get that
14 correctly. Take a few minutes. We do want to devote
15 enough time for the official part of the testimony.

16 But, again, state your name for the record. Go
17 to the podium there and take a few minutes.

18 DOUG WILSMAN: I just have a quick question.
19 My name is Doug Wilsman. I'm on the water board in
20 Ramona. And at that the presentation in Ramona,
21 Shirley, you told us that you were going to meet with
22 Dianne Jacob and discuss the legislation that was
23 proposed. And I wondered if that meeting has occurred

24 and if you have anything to report.

25 MR. OTT: Well, I think in this case my name is
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48

1 Shirley. I was the one that made that comment in
2 Ramona.

3 We did have an official meeting of LAFCO just
4 this past Monday that I was referring to both in
5 Pine Valley and Ramona, where our commission was
6 scheduled to deliberate, take the position on Senate
7 Bill 806. That's the Hollingsworth Bill that
8 reallocates property taxes for life safety and services.

9 And that presentation by Supervisor Jacob was
10 made. And to just cut to the chase, our commission
11 unanimously, after quite a bit of discussion, supported
12 that bill. That support allows me to put in motion our
13 legislative advocacy program to assist with that bill.

14 Supervisor Jacob provided extensive testimony.
15 She had a written statement that she read into the
16 record, which will be located on our minutes portion of
17 our website in about two to four weeks. But,
18 essentially, she went over the disparity in this county
19 in terms of how property taxes are allocated in
20 comparison to other counties, primarily all counties
21 north of us.

22 Primarily, Los Angeles and San Francisco have a
23 much different relationship in how the agencies within
24 those counties receive a portion of the one percent
25 property tax allocation. Supervisor Jacobs indicated a
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49

1 number of times that the number of 63 cents out of the
2 dollar seems to go to other counties with respect to
3 funding schools. And in this county, it's in the
4 50-cent range. That equates to many hundreds of
5 millions of dollars difference between how we're treated
6 and how other counties are treated.

7 Supervisor Jacob has proposed, through the
8 Hollingsworth bill, that one percent of the one percent
9 property tax, which is one one-hundredth, would be
10 reallocated for fire protection services in the
11 unincorporated area. That we equate to about 40 million
12 dollars, just that fractional amount.

13 The road ahead is a steep one, in terms of
14 SB-806. But, both philosophically as well as fiscally,
15 it seems to be the direction that many people are
16 interested in to reallocate the funds.

17 DOUG WILSMAN: One quick follow-up. Ramona is
18 only left in the discussion in that bill. There's 22
19 agencies in Phase 1 that she's selected to put in the
20 bill.

21 I just wondered what the significance of that
22 is. Because we've sort of fallen out of the rest of the
23 things.

24 MR. OTT: Well, like all legislation, this is
25 literally the second or third week that this bill has
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1 been alive. It was introduced on the 23rd and assigned
2 to the committee on the 26th. It's got a long road
3 ahead of it.

4 There will be amendments to the bill. The
5 number of agencies that are still out of the bill that
6 must be consolidated, agencies or entities, is 20.
7 That's what you're referring to.

8 Ramona Water District, as well as the other
9 three water districts, are identified as being Phase 1
10 agencies. That's something that we'll be working out
11 with the author of the bill, as we will with other
12 conditions.

13 Sir, why don't you come up to the podium and
14 state your name for the record?

15 WEAVER SIMONSEN: For the record my name is
16 Weaver Simonson, and I'm from Valley Center.

17 And I have a question for you, Shirley. And
18 it's regarding the new accounting rules that are
19 impacting all local governments across the nation
20 regarding medical costs of retirees now being required
21 to carry on the books.

22 And do the numbers that we're looking at in the
23 LAFCO report take into account these new requirements
24 and the cost associated with them?

25 MS. ANDERSON: No. Simple enough answer?

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51

1 WEAVER SIMONSEN: Thank you.

2 MS. ANDERSON: Excuse me. Just a little bit --
Page 47

3 I was a little curt.

4 There really is no requirement to supply the
5 medical component of it. So in that most agencies would
6 on the base level conservative model, that was not
7 factored in.

8 JOHN FITCH: Hello. How are you?

9 MS. ANDERSON: How are you?

10 JOHN FITCH: I'm pretty good.

11 I had a question. I was surprised to see in
12 your presentation that there wasn't the joint powers
13 agreement governance model in there. And I looked in
14 the report, and I saw some reason that had something to
15 do with not having enough money to justify that type of
16 governance.

17 So my question is, is a joint powers agreement
18 being considered? It's a three-part question.

19 What are the benefits and drawbacks to such an
20 arrangement, regardless of whether or not it's being
21 considered?

22 And is the recommendation to this effect within
23 the jurisdiction of LAFCO?

24 MS. ANDERSON: Start with the third one first,
25 then I'll also give it to John to elaborate a little

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52

1 further.

2 No, it's not within the jurisdictional
3 authority of LAFCO, and it's primarily the reason why
4 it's not actively being considered at this point. LAFCO

5 doesn't have authority. It has always, though, been in
6 the discussion.

7 And if you go back to review with the Fire
8 Chiefs Association and the District Fire Chiefs
9 Association, various commissions and various reports
10 have reviewed joint powers authorities. It's always in
11 the mix. It's something to look forward to in the
12 future. But there's no authority under what LAFCO is
13 chartered to do, to do a joint powers authority.

14 MR. GOSS: Further, if you go back and look
15 at my attachment, there's a brief discussion of JPAs and
16 the possibility that -- if you back up and take a look
17 at Orange County, there they have a JPA that is based on
18 a number of very traditional financially solid entities,
19 cities and the county.

20 It may be over time if the regional Fire
21 Protection District is created and becomes financially
22 stable; it may be a member of a JPA, along with other
23 agencies, like Phase 2 agencies or some smaller cities.
24 So that's also outlined as a possible option in the
25 future.

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53

1 MR. TRAYLOR: I'll also weigh in on this. The
2 Fire Service Committee, under the leadership of the Fire
3 District Association, Fire Chiefs Association,
4 entertained that thought of a JPA.

5 The main goal of the Phase 1/Phase 2 was to
6 separate the Phase 1, which are the unfunded and
7 underfunded areas of this region, the unincorporated

8 area of the county. Once Phase 1 is up to a more
9 equitable level of funding, then it's very conducive to
10 a JPA.

11 JOHN FITCH: I'd like to just go a little bit
12 further.

13 We all know that there's a shortfall of
14 funding. And no matter which form of governance that we
15 have, we still have a shortfall of funding. So why
16 couldn't -- I don't understand why a JPA is being thrown
17 out, not being actively considered.

18 MS. ANDERSON: I don't know that it's been
19 thrown out. It's in the vision of what will happen
20 eventually. Once existing agencies are funded enough to
21 the point where they would be operational within a JPA.
22 And again --

23 JOHN FITCH: Is there some requirement for an
24 operational level to form a JPA?

25 MS. ANDERSON: It's being viewed as a phased
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54

1 concept. We need to look at funding, existing services
2 now. And then a JPA within really a larger vision, all
3 the cities. It's something similar to what they have in
4 Orange County. It's certainly on the table for the
5 future.

6 Mike, did you have a --

7 MR. OTT: Well, let me just emphasize that we
8 did look at JPAs as well as other hybrid elements of
9 working cooperatively within the fire protection sector.

10 We did that as part of a more global review of fire
11 protection. I'm sure we referred to a Macro Report.
12 Not Micro, but Macro. It's also available on our
13 website. Where we discussed the advantages,
14 disadvantages.

15 The biggest disadvantage for LAFCO is, we have
16 absolutely no control over the establishment of JPAs.
17 They're cooperative arrangements in which the entities
18 that participate in the JPA can come and go as they
19 please. And that was something that we looked at, in
20 terms of not having enough teeth at this point in time,
21 with respect to structurally rearranging how fire
22 protection and emergency medical services are provided.

23 Notwithstanding that comment, we encourage
24 agencies to coordinate better, to centralize services,
25 to share training and facilities and so forth and to be
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55

1 an adjunct to whatever we wind up doing here in the
2 LAFCO process.

3 We certainly don't want to exclude it. But,
4 again, we don't have the control over the formation.

5 Have you stated your name for the record?

6 JOHN FITCH: John Fitch, F-I-T-C-H.

7 MR. OTT: Do you have any other questions
8 before we proceed?

9 JOHN FITCH: Yeah, I had one other.

10 The reason I bring up this first question is
11 because, when I was at the meeting in Pine Valley on
12 Tuesday, it appeared to me that everybody that was part

13 of a local agency wanted to broaden -- be responsible
14 for their local agency, you know, their initial I.A.
15 And to me it seems like a Joint Powers of Agreement
16 might fit that. That's why I brought that question up
17 to you.

18 Second question is -- forgive me -- what steps
19 could the County take, short-term and long-term, by
20 incorporating fire protection into its charter? I
21 understand that the County doesn't have that in its
22 charter right now. Is that correct?

23 What steps could they take if they did
24 incorporate fire protection into their charter?

25 MS. ANDERSON: They have the authority to
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56

1 provide fire protection now. Charter change is not
2 required, short-term or long-term.

3 JOHN FITCH: Thank you.

4 MR. OTT: Thank you very much.

5 We will begin with the speaker slips. I just
6 saw one of my additional bosses enter the room,
7 John Ingles of the Santa Fe Irrigation District
8 representative. Welcome, John.

9 Our first three speakers, if you can come up to
10 the front. If you get a little tired standing, there
11 are a few available places in the first row of the
12 audience seating here.

13 Byron MacFarlane, Pauline Hadley, and Jeff --
14 just Jeff with an "S." I can't make this one out.

15 You'll have to spell your name when you're up here. So
16 we'll start with Byron and Pauline.

17 And, again, try to be as concise with your
18 remarks as possible. We have a number of speaker slips.
19 We won't have any time allotted for minimums or
20 maximums. But use your judgment. Be to the point. And
21 remember you're going to be transcribed here. So if you
22 can state your name for the record, please, at the
23 podium.

24 BYRON MacFARLANE: My name is Byron MacFarlane.

25 The citizens of Elfin Forest have voted either
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57

1 the largest tax benefit allowance to fire support or
2 among the top ones in the -- in the county. They desire
3 to have local control of those funds and benefit fees
4 under the guidance of the County as they guide our fire
5 advisory board and provide tax funds back to us.

6 I think it's important that we have that local
7 control. Our fire advisory board can meet probably in a
8 period of 24 hours with proper notification to all the
9 citizens so we can attend to matters that need quick
10 response for our fire department.

11 Our fire volunteers are drawn from around the
12 area. And we have a ten-minute limit that they have to
13 be at the fire station. So they're at the fire station
14 for most of the calls that we have.

15 We probably have, on average, eight -- seven to
16 eight volunteer firemen on every call. And if the call
17 is very serious and needs more than that, people leave

18 their jobs, and they leave what they're doing to come
19 provide support to the fire department. We had a
20 structure fire about two years ago in which I think the
21 majority of the members of the fire department were
22 there at that structure fire soon after it occurred.

23 Those citizens desire that they can hold the
24 fire board accountable. They elect the seven members of
25 the fire board on a rotating basis. So the fire board
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58

1 does not have everyone change on a one-time basis. We
2 are an island, as you can see on the chart there. If
3 you remember what it showed, it shows Elfin Forest as an
4 island in surrounding cities.

5 We would like to be considered and moved out of
6 Phase 1 and moved into Phase 2. And I think that was
7 mentioned previously by DPLU, possibly. He mentioned it
8 in his talk, that there is an opportunity move us out of
9 that Phase 1.

10 I think this may be going over it again. But
11 the distance from the county is much more than 24 hours.
12 To get to the county and get a reading on what we need
13 to do to serve the citizens of CSA 107 takes probably a
14 month, if it is a serious matter.

15 We train with the North County. We train under
16 their tenets. We fight fires with North County's --
17 with the North County zone support. And we support
18 their training methods and use them.

19 And the statement was made that DPLU has

20 cooperative agreements with all agencies but one. And I
21 think that one agency may be CSA 107. And CSA 107
22 desires to conduct our business the way we need to
23 conduct our business and obtain the fire support from the
24 fire professionals in the north zone.

25 We did not want to take the County's offer of
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59

1 support, because we do not want additional controls
2 placed on our fire department that we were not able to
3 say yes or no to. Whether those controls were good or
4 bad did not make a great deal of difference to us. We
5 can accept what we need and we can decline what we need
6 without having that -- the County funding.

7 I think it's much like the federal government
8 and the schools. If the federal government provides
9 support to the schools, then they tell the schools what
10 they can teach. Since the County does not provide the
11 support to CSA 107 through the enhancement program --
12 and I think the enhancement program is a good one for
13 many agencies in San Diego, the ones that have accepted
14 it and the briefing today was -- thank you very much for
15 that.

16 We hadn't heard all the tenets of the proposal.
17 And reading it sometimes leaves you in the dark. So the
18 presentation was very helpful today.

19 CSA 107 wanted to go the road along with the
20 north zone and the fire professionals and not be
21 accountable to -- "accountable" is probably the wrong
22 word -- and not be governed by an agency outside of our

23 area.

24 Thank you.

25 MR. OTT: Thank you, Byron.

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60

1 Our next speaker is -- you're not Pauline.

2 PAULINE HADLEY: I wanted to give my time to
3 Madelyn to speak on my behalf.

4 MR. OTT: We will get to Madelyn in the order
5 that her speaker slip is here.

6 PAULINE HADLEY: But could she speak for me?

7 MR. OTT: We'll deal with that when Madelyn
8 comes up.

9 Jeff if you can spell your last name for us.

10 JEFF SWENERTON: School principals and doctors
11 are not known for their handwriting. S-W-E-N-E-R-T-O-N.
12 My name is Jeff Swenerton. I'm a member of the board of
13 the Elfin Forest Town Council.

14 MR. OTT: Are you a doctor or a lawyer?

15 JEFF SWENERTON: I am not a doctor.

16 My primary concern is that -- is the statement
17 of services not changing. I was pleased today to hear
18 some comments -- actually, the first time I attended the
19 Pine Valley presentation and I've attended this one.

20 For the first time, I've heard real statements
21 of concern about volunteers. You have a 14- to
22 20-million-dollar program or whatever it's worth. I
23 would venture to say it's worth much more than that.

24 As I mentioned, I have been a school principal.

25 I'm also very active in non-profits. And I was on the
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61

1 volunteer fire department for a number of years.
2 Volunteers are a very, very critical component. They're
3 an odd duck. They are difficult to motivate.

4 You've got excellent data out there. I mean,
5 just one piece that came out of Pine Valley is the
6 Pine Valley Fire Department has five volunteers. That's
7 not very many. There are probably reasons for that.

8 I would suggest that there must be incredible
9 research across this nation on what are the effective
10 components of a volunteer program. I look at the
11 comment of one volunteer coordinator. And it makes me
12 shudder to think that when -- I was listening in
13 Pine Valley, and I think you've heard a lot of this.

14 When a volunteer talks to you -- I think Byron
15 just before me was really talking about a relationship.
16 A volunteer volunteers because they're valued. You
17 can't quantify it. You have to experience and value it.
18 You have to get on a truck and be involved. It's that
19 kind of level that you've got to deliver on your
20 coordination.

21 I was pleased with what you said, John. What
22 you were saying about trying to deliver it at a little
23 bit more local basis. I think you're dead wrong in
24 putting that volunteer coordinator at the top. I think
25 you really need to divide it up and look to your advisory

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62

1 council to support the program.

2 Remember what you're giving up, what you're
3 giving up in Elfin Forest. You're giving up a very
4 talented chief. You're giving up a very talented group
5 of captains that care for those volunteers and
6 appreciate the fact that they're there.

7 If your -- if your people that are coming in,
8 these permanent people, if they're just constantly
9 rotating people that have no investment in the
10 volunteers, your program will fail. And your statement
11 and your promise to keep services at the same level will
12 fail.

13 And so I would encourage you to invest as much
14 as you can in looking -- I'm not talking about a manual.
15 I'm talking about, what are effective practices for
16 volunteers in a volunteer fire department? And I'm sure
17 the research is out there.

18 I have two other concerns. The first one
19 relates to the funding. And for us who are taxed
20 heavily, we have a great deal of pride in the
21 Elfin Forest Fire Department. We obviously have a lot
22 of ownership in this fire department.

23 We are concerned about the funding. The
24 statement is made that the funding -- our tax dollars
25 will stay within our community. My concern is that

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63

1 there -- and I don't mean to be negative -- but the term
2 "shell game" is the best description of it.

3 Shirley, I think I heard in Pine Valley the
4 statement -- and I appreciate your candor that there
5 really is no guarantee that there won't be a shell game.
6 And when you're looking at Elfin Forest, we have
7 wonderful equipment. We have great volunteers. We've
8 got tremendous assets there. How do we have a guarantee
9 that we're going to be delivered the funds that we are
10 promised -- that we should have, not from the CSA money,
11 but from the other money?

12 And what local accountability -- Byron
13 described the advisory committee. They report to the
14 community. We look and see how every dollar is spent.
15 How do we have that accountability and assurance that
16 that will happen?

17 Shirley, I appreciate your candor. But I also
18 would like to have LAFCO address that, that you have to
19 ensure that that money stays there. And Elfin Forest
20 may have better services than another area. But that's
21 because we're paying for it.

22 The last question that I have -- and it has a
23 very great concern to Elfin Forest. We are -- a portion
24 of our district is in the Rancho Santa Fe School
25 District. The Rancho Santa Fe School District is a
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64

1 basic aid school district. It is exempt from the -- the
2 proposed legislation would reapportion the share of the
3 San Diego County School District money. Basic aid

4 districts are exempt. A large portion of the
5 Elfin Forest is within the Rancho Santa Fe School
6 District, which is a basic aid district.

7 If legislation fails that requires revenue
8 neutrality for revenue-limited school districts be
9 varied, an equitable situation exists. So if that
10 legislation goes away, my question and the concern that
11 I have is that if we still do take that money, that
12 means that we are taking money from the school children
13 of East County and bringing it in for Elfin Forest fire
14 services.

15 And I just want clarification that that would
16 not occur. And I appreciate your challenge. You've got
17 a real challenge ahead of you. And I appreciate your
18 work. Thank you.

19 MR. OTT: Thank you.

20 Let me respond to his last question, Shirley,
21 if you want to deal with his other question.

22 Regarding the reallocation of monies from
23 schools, the most important provision in SB-806 is that
24 no school district that has money shifted from it will
25 receive any net loss. In other words, the State would
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65

1 be required to backfill any school district that is
2 named in this bill.

3 And there are several districts, as you
4 mentioned, Jeff, that would be excluded, the basic aid
5 districts. I think there are some districts in Del Mar,

6 Solana Beach, that falls into that category.

7 But the important thing is that the county has
8 sponsored a bill. In particular, Supervisor Jacob supports
9 the bill. Supervisor Jacob, was formerly a president of a school
10 board and the last thing she wants is for any school
11 district to be impacted by this proposal. So that's
12 a very important requirement and also clarification
13 that people need to have regarding the bill.

14 Shirley, if you can respond on how we could
15 ensure that monies generated within communities will be
16 spent back in those communities, as well as the other
17 question relating to that regarding spending priorities
18 of regional fire district with discretionary funds.

19 MS. ANDERSON: Well, as the Micro Report says,
20 there are two components to what is sustainable right now.
21 Everyone knows it's the property tax, and it's
22 voter-approved special assessments.

23 Special assessments, by law, can only be
24 expended in the areas where they're collected. It's a
25 contract, again, between the voters who approve them and
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66

1 the agency that is the administrator of those funds. So
2 even though jurisdictional boundaries would go away --
3 Elfin Forest could go away -- the zones inside those
4 jurisdictions where special districts are collected will
5 remain intact. We're not going to put another boundary
6 around them. But they would in essence be the same
7 thing.

8 The model would say that there's strict
Page 61

9 fiduciary oversight. We're talking about making
10 recommendations that there would be, perhaps, elected
11 fiduciary advisory committees for each one of those
12 zones.

13 This is a big model. I think right now there's
14 23 of these zones. Many of our agencies have multiple
15 special district areas. So types of details, you know,
16 the devil is in the details.

17 The other issue is a little larger. And it has
18 to do with the nature of taxes. Property tax is a
19 discretionary fund. It is in every agency. The County
20 takes your discretionary property tax, and the Board of
21 Supervisors allocates it to whatever need they see most
22 important.

23 Property tax from Elfin Forest doesn't go back
24 to Elfin Forest. Property tax from Borrego Springs
25 doesn't go back to Borrego Springs. It all goes to the
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67

1 County general fund and is allocated according to
2 decisions made by the Board of Supervisors.

3 The same issue would be in effect if there was
4 a regional fire protection agency. All the current
5 boundaries would cease to exist. Property tax would
6 be -- policy decisions, funding decisions, service
7 decisions, would be made by a new elected body. And
8 property tax would be allocated according to the need for
9 the regional good. This is the nature of the
10 distribution of tax.

11

MR. OTT: Thank you, Shirley.

12

If the following three speakers can come

13

forward: Joan Van Ingen, Bruce Tebbs, and Madelyn

14

Buchalter.

15

Joan, if you can spell your last name.

16

JOAN VAN INGEN: Two words, V-A-N, capital

17

I-N-G-E-N.

18

MR. OTT: Thank you.

19

JOAN VAN INGEN: I thank you for having this.

20

We tried to go to one of the other ones, but the weather

21

was not good.

22

I am on the Deer Springs District Fire Board.

23

And as such, possibly, my concerns with this whole

24

process, they're a little different. They're a little

25

different, because we have been facing something up

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68

1

there which is new to the whole area. And that is

2

putting a large city development within a mountainous

3

area that's been -- it's been designated by CDF as

4

having two of the three possible worst fire problems.

5

And this is what we were concerned about. I made a

6

couple of notes. I don't usually, but I thought I'd

7

better.

8

First of all, the County of -- the County told

9

the Stonegate people they had to remove shelter-in-place

10

from the Stonegate project, that it was not appropriate

11

for that project. Therefore, it could not be used. We

12

were very happy. Very, very happy.

13

Then the County bypassed our board totally, did

14 not come back with a new fire protection plan that they
15 had from the developer. They not only bypassed our
16 board, they passed it. And they passed it over the
17 Christmas holiday when supposedly it was closed in the
18 county.

19 Now, we were really unhappy with that.
20 Because, although they have said you cannot have
21 shelter-in-place, now they say, "Leave your homes. Go
22 down to a park area within the project." And I call
23 that "shelter-in-park." Same SIP, worse even than
24 shelter-in-place, totally.

25 The County is trying to put through a new
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69

1 policy. The policy would be, basically, if a
2 development cannot be evacuated, one of the options
3 would be shelter-in-place. Now, that's scary. That is
4 so scary. And I personally am pretty upset.

5 I feel the County is not trustworthy. The DPLU
6 is certainly not working to support the people of the
7 district. And I took an oath when I joined this fire
8 board to support this district and the people of that
9 district.

10 These people are paying a tax surcharge for the
11 Deer Springs Fire District. And I feel if this happens
12 to us that I would label it a modern day taxation
13 without representation.

14 Thank you.

15 MR. OTT: Thank you, Joan.

16 Madelyn, I believe you're up next. And we'll
17 give you 27.5 seconds for Pauline.

18 (Laughter.)

19 MADELYN BUCHALTER: I have requested some time.
20 I represent a community group called LLC Fire. And
21 there have been hundreds of letters and e-mails coming
22 in. So I wanted to follow up on Joan's comments and
23 just give further background.

24 There's a proposed development in North County
25 called Stonegate Mountains that serves as an example of
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70

1 what is taking place with regard to fire safety in
2 San Diego County at large. It sheds light on the
3 County's plan to disband the independent local fire
4 districts and what the disastrous consequences of such
5 an action would be.

6 Stonegate is a 2,700-unit development proposed
7 in a severe, high fire-hazard, mountainous area of North
8 County. In planning scenarios, the CDF has described it
9 as a likely site for a future major fire catastrophe.
10 CDF has predicted a fire on Marion Mountain as highly
11 destructive and virtually impossible to control, taking
12 10 to 15 minutes to go from the base of the mountain to
13 the crest.

14 The Stonegate project sits atop an enormous
15 fuel load of dense wildland vegetation that has been
16 building up for 100 years. 1200 project acres are
17 preserved wildlands that adjoin thousands of acres with
18 a similar fuel load.

19 The entire project is served by only two
20 internal roads both emptying into the same rural road,
21 Deer Springs, which is rated at failing and will remain
22 failing if widened to four lanes or even to six lanes.
23 Given the project's extremely limited egress, if a fire
24 occurs during Santa Ana wind conditions, 10- to 13,000
25 residents will be trapped. The developer has
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71

1 acknowledged that evacuation will be impossible.

2 Over the Christmas 2006 holidays, the County
3 approved the fire protection plan for the Stonegate
4 project, completely bypassing the local agency having
5 jurisdiction, the Deer Springs Fire Protection District.
6 That was an unprecedented action. Never before had the
7 responsible agency been bypassed.

8 In fact, prior to the turnover, the entire
9 Deer Springs board, as the result of the November 2006
10 elections, the County had repeatedly stated that
11 Deer Springs' approval of Stonegate's fire plan was
12 required before the project could move forward.

13 When Stonegate's County-approved fire plan was
14 examined by the Deer Springs Fire Board, it was found to
15 be grossly deficient. Stonegate's plan incredibly
16 predicts that the majority of wildfires on
17 Marion Mountain would be easily controlled. Defying all
18 logic, all logic, and all principles of wildfire
19 science, it predicts that any wildfire would bump up
20 against fuel clearances and, quote, "run out of fuel."

21 The plan retains the concept of
22 shelter-in-place. It introduces yet another
23 objectionable policy called temporary relocation within
24 the project. The plan actually instructs residents to
25 seek safety outdoors in the park during a wildfire, in
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72

1 effect advising people to go from the frying pan into
2 the fire. There is no evacuation plan. The plan does
3 not address what happens to residents during a wildland
4 fire, except to say that they would be given brochures
5 at the time of sale on how to avoid panic.

6 There is no mention on how to mitigate smoke
7 inhalation, which accounts for up to 80 percent of all
8 fire fatalities. The plan ignores the plight of
9 infants, children, asthmatics, the elderly, and the
10 medically compromised.

11 On January 19th, 2007 Stonegate's fire
12 protection plan was unanimously rejected by the Deer
13 Springs Fire Protection Board. Three days later, on
14 January 22nd, the County Department of Planning
15 director, Gary Pryor, called a special meeting to
16 educate an outspoken member of the Deer Springs Fire
17 Board about quote, "the process," unquote.

18 Mr. Pryor stated that the clients of his
19 agency, the DPLU, were developers and that his agency's
20 job was quote, "to assist them and level the playing
21 field for them," unquote. He said that he would not
22 allow the quote, "silver bullet," unquote of fire safety
23 stop the building of a development. He also stated that

24 the Deer Springs Fire Protection District had no role in
25 the approval of the fire protection plan.

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73

1 The Fire District board member expressed his
2 objections to the conduct of the DPLU and was asked by
3 Mr. Pryor to leave. At about the same time, the County
4 issued a draft document proposing to revise County
5 policy on wildland fire protection. It proposed the
6 adoption of shelter-in-place as acceptable fire
7 protection strategy when quote, "secondary access is
8 unattainable due to topographical or geographical
9 constraints," unquote.

10 Shelter-in-place, for those who are unfamiliar,
11 instructs people to remain inside their homes in the
12 event of a wildland fire and not to evacuate. It is a
13 myth and a hoax insofar as fire protection is concerned.
14 It is not accepted policy anywhere in the United States.
15 It has never been tested in the planned community during
16 an actual wildland fire.

17 In August 2006 the American Lung Association
18 wrote a position paper on the subject, addressed to the
19 County DPLU, imploring that this policy not be accepted
20 because it would result in the deaths of thousands.
21 Incredibly, the County has ignored the overwhelming mass
22 of medical evidence and has forged ahead with this plan
23 that will enable dense development in highly
24 fire-hazardous wildland areas of the county.

25 With the Deer Springs Fire Protection District

1 refusing to grant fire district approval to the
2 Stonegate project, the County became instantly motivated
3 to protect their development agenda by eliminating the
4 local fire districts altogether, a proposal that has
5 been considered over decades without action taken.

6 To claim, as the County has, that the 2003
7 fires spurred this current move toward consolidation is
8 disingenuous. The 2003 fires occurred nearly four years
9 ago. But this current impetus toward a merger is now
10 taking place against the tell tale backdrop of recent
11 events regarding the Stonegate project.

12 In the County's January 22nd consolidation
13 proposal, the County writes, quote, "All new development
14 should be coordinated and evaluated within the DPLU for
15 fire protection purposes," end quote. This would give
16 the County absolute power to approve developments in the
17 wildland urban interface areas and to ignore fire safety
18 issues such as evacuation or the impact of new
19 development on existing communities.

20 Many such unsafe developments have already been
21 approved in San Diego County, and many more are being
22 planned. What has occurred in the Deer Springs Fire
23 District and the Stonegate development is a microcosm of
24 what to expect if a merger is allowed to take place that
25 concentrates all decision-making authority with the
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1 County.

2 LAFCO's board is urged to consider the County's
3 action of deliberately bypassing the Deer Springs Fire
4 District and approving a deficient and dangerous fire
5 protection plan over the Christmas holidays without even
6 first making it public as required by law or releasing
7 it to the Deer Springs Fire Board and personnel.

8 The California Public Records Act was
9 repeatedly violated by the County in its attempt to
10 shield Stonegate's fire protection plan from public
11 scrutiny. When the next major fire occurs in San Diego
12 County -- a question not of if, but when -- the results
13 will be far more catastrophic than the Cedar and
14 Paradise Fires.

15 There will be massive loss of life because of
16 the numerous unevacuable developments being approved in
17 the wildland fire areas by the County Planning
18 Department and the Board of Supervisors. There is now
19 strong emphasis on the federal government level to limit
20 and curtail such development because of the dangers of
21 located population density in high fire-prone areas.

22 On January 30th, 2007, top officials from the
23 U. S. Department of Agriculture, Department of Interior,
24 and Government Accountability Office testified at a
25 U. S. Senate hearing on costs of wildfire suppression.
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76

1 It was concluded that it is the responsibility of local

2 governments to reduce development in the wildland areas
3 because it has sent fire suppression costs soaring,
4 hampering fire-fighting efforts and recklessly
5 endangering lives.

6 San Diego County government has failed to heed
7 this advice and is moving 180 degrees in the opposite
8 direction by working to further the economic interests
9 of developers in the wildland areas at the expense of
10 public safety.

11 For all of the above reasons, we urge LAFCO to
12 preserve the current structure of local independent fire
13 districts and to reject the proposal to disband these
14 districts. These districts serve the critical function
15 of preventing concentration of power and, ultimately,
16 abuse of power resulting from the influence of special
17 interests.

18 The special districts are the watchdogs of
19 public safety, as demonstrated in the Deer Springs
20 District. Given the County's conduct regarding the
21 Stonegate Marion Mountain project, together with its
22 proposal to officially adopt the disastrous
23 shelter-in-place policy as acceptable fire protection
24 strategy, the dangers of centralizing fire safety
25 decisions become evident.

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77

1 Thank you.

2 MR. OTT: Would it be possible to have your
3 written comments to be handed to Anne on the very end of
4 the podium, if you could. Just hand them to her now.

5 MADELYN BUCHALTER: And I can e-mail them to
6 her.

7 MR. OTT: You can e-mail them to LAFCO staff or
8 contact Shirley. I bumped into Anne during your
9 presentation, and her machine may pick up a bunch of
10 stuttering rather than some of the words.

11 We have Bruce Tebbs, then we'll be calling up
12 three more speakers.

13 BRUCE TEBBS: Bruce Tebbs, T-E-B-B-S.

14 I'm from the Deer Springs Fire Board. And I
15 couldn't agree more with Joan's remarks or Madelyn's
16 remarks.

17 I would like to say, in summary, that this is
18 really all about money. Everybody is chasing money.
19 And, first of all, I have nothing against that. I'm a
20 proud American capitalist. And I think that's a good
21 thing to do. But I do think that there's a line that
22 you can't cross, and that is crossing the line of saving
23 human life while you're chasing money.

24 What do I mean by chasing money? The DPLU
25 director informed me directly, person-to-person, that
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78

1 developers are clients. And they are. They bring in a
2 great amount of revenue to the County. That's how he
3 feels about them.

4 LAFCO is chasing money. You're trying to get a
5 piece of that tax dollar so that you can fund what you
6 think is the right thing to do. And I know people have

7 put in a lot of hard work.
8 But, you know, CDF is chasing money. They want
9 better pensions, better salaries. That's just the way
10 it is. You can't cross this line of giving up human
11 life. And I believe that CDF, people from the top on
12 down and others with responsibility as supervisors,
13 county supervisors and DPLU officials have totally given
14 it up and do not care. No matter what they say being
15 more about human life, money is more important.

16 And Joan ran through that list with regard to
17 Marion Mountain and what they're doing. There is no
18 evacuation plan. The developer has stated there's no
19 way to get people off the mountain. There are
20 13,000 people on top of a fuel-infested mountain,
21 unbelievable amounts of fuel. You can't walk through
22 it. It's 15 to 25 feet tall. And it's not just the
23 acreage, which is about 2,000 acres on the site. It's
24 surrounded by thousands and thousands more acres.

25 Why is our community so upset? Well, we saw
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79

1 the fires firsthand in 2003. People that used to think
2 like I did, "Oh, the firemen will get to it. They'll
3 put out before it gets anywhere near here." Now we know
4 that's not true. They won't. We had people, friends,
5 that lost their homes. And there was loss of life. And
6 if you can't evacuate, you have to preserve evacuation.

7 If you can't evacuate and you think for one
8 second that in any modern fire-resistant, fire-retardant
9 home that it won't catch on fire in a wildland fire,

10 you're crazy. And there are plenty of examples to prove
11 that it will catch on fire and burn to the ground.

12 And if you have people in those homes, as
13 suggested by DPLU at the highest levels, they won't die
14 in the evacuation. They'll die in their homes. And
15 they'll be in much greater numbers. And as you load
16 those projects up, more and more people will be trapped
17 that previously could have evacuated. But now the roads
18 are jammed, and they'll be stuck. And that's just the
19 way it is.

20 This is the line in the sand that just can't be
21 crossed. We have to stand up. And that's what we're
22 doing at the Deer Springs Fire Board. That's why the
23 entire community erased the old board and put a new
24 board in. That's what it's all about.

25 Someone has to stand up, be an adult and say,
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80

1 you know, we chased the money as far as we could go.
2 And now we have to put human life ahead of all that. So
3 that's what we're regoing to do. And we'll fight LAFCO
4 taking over our board, not taking away our
5 representation to the Nth degree. We'll do everything
6 that we can possibly do.

7 I do appreciate all of the hard work that's
8 been done. I'm not against people working hard or
9 making money. But that's the line that can't be
10 crossed.

11 Thanks.

12

MR. OTT: Thank you.

13

If the following speakers will come up:

14

Weaver Simonsen, Michael Thometz, and James Higbee. And

15

we do have a couple of chairs out here for those that

16

would like to sit while the talks are going on. So if

17

those three speakers will please come forward.

18

I take it that you're Mr. Simonsen?

19

WEAVER SIMONSEN: My name is Weaver Simonsen.

20

And I'm a director on the Valley Center Fire Protection

21

District Board. And I'd like to make a few comments.

22

First of all, I'd like to thank you for the

23

opportunity and giving the workshop so that we can voice

24

our opinions and concerns in reference to this. We

25

appreciate it, to have that opportunity to come down and

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81

1 speak before you.

2

Having said that, I noted -- one of the

3

comments I noted in reference to North County in the

4

status quo that we have, quote, a de facto

5

centralization because Deer Springs and ourselves, we

6

are all using CDF. And from my observation, that

7

de facto command and control worked very well.

8

I live on Paradise Mountain in Valley Center.

9

And I got up on October 2003, Sunday morning, and I

10

watched the fire. And I watched the fire burn all the

11

way around the mountain. And I watched CDF deploy

12

assets, not only CDF's assets because they used command

13

and control. But we had assets from numerous areas in

14

our area.

15 And we lost a few homes. But those homes were
16 almost indefensible in reference to saving them. You
17 couldn't get into them or they had wood siding. So they
18 weren't designed to -- in reference to DPLU issues, they
19 weren't clear. It would have been very difficult.

20 But the point was, we had command and control.
21 There was command and control in the North County. And
22 on Paradise Mountain, when I got back into my house on
23 Wednesday -- I finally left on Sunday evening when I
24 watched the wind get behind the fire -- when I got back
25 in, the fire had completely burned around the mountain.

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82

1 CDF and its forces had shoved the fire away
2 from the homes. And we're scattered, so they're not
3 clustered. So it did work. And it was working. Now, I
4 don't know what happened in the East County. But I can
5 tell you in reference to Paradise and the structure that
6 was in place from my view, it worked. So my first
7 comment is in reference to the centralization or
8 consolidation, because it does exist and works very
9 well.

10 My next comment I'd like to make is in
11 reference to the County's proposed plan. Two things you
12 should know: No. 1, in 1975 I was a volunteer fireman
13 in Valley Center when the County decided that because of
14 funding issues and a three-to-two vote, it could no
15 longer and would no longer fund fire protection. And
16 they moved forward, providing us with fire engines and

17 said, "Go figure out how you're going to do it yourself,
18 because it isn't our job to provide fire protection to
19 you." And since -- and we did.

20 And as you can see, it's part of the reason why
21 we have this huge bifurcated system. Because if we
22 would have used the money then as we are doing now, the
23 County was in fact finding CDF to provide fire
24 protection in the rural area. That's my first comment.

25 The second comment you should be aware of, in
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83

1 16 days I'm retiring after 26 years with the County.
2 I've seen a lot of different issues in the County. I've
3 seen this county go from bankruptcy to one of the best
4 funded local governments in the State of California, and
5 maybe in the nation. It is -- if you talk to anyone and
6 you look at our balance sheet, the County's balance
7 sheet, it is well funded.

8 And one of the reasons that we've been able to
9 provide -- or the County has been able to do the
10 enhancement program is, it is well funded. But one of
11 the core concepts that was introduced to create that
12 was, you used one-time funding for one-time
13 requirements. And that concept to me is being violated
14 right now.

15 Because I'm looking at -- I took advantage of
16 the County. I've got an extra firefightrer on my engine
17 in Valley Center. But it's not a one-time requirement.
18 It's an ongoing requirement. So I'm now putting the
19 citizens at a higher level of service, but it's at a

20 risk. Because there's no guarantee that that money will
21 stay there.

22 A three-two vote, that money goes away. A
23 recession, property taxes drop, other requirements
24 mentioned that the funding is a general fund -- or
25 property tax revenue, it's going to go away. So then
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84

1 what do I do?

2 I'm going to go back, try to restructure and
3 figure out how I'm going to maintain that level of
4 service that the community has come to expect. So I
5 have concerns about that. I have concerns about that
6 any time we come up with funding issues. I know those
7 of you are getting mitigation fees. We haven't. With
8 mitigation fees, one-time funding, I can build a fire
9 station. But I can't man it. And so I'm into that
10 struggle.

11 So I've got money. Great. I can build a
12 building. I can't man it, because I can't afford it.
13 So, again, funding becomes the issue. And I think that
14 was central when we listened to all the presentations
15 and the issues with where's the money going to come
16 from?

17 So I'm going to make this short, and I'm going
18 to conclude. I'm going to be meeting with my board.
19 And I've recommended -- I'm recommending to them the
20 three principles that we see in Valley Center. Or I'm
21 going to recommend them.

22 One is that their service levels remain the
23 same or increase.

24 Two, that we have sustainable funding that will
25 accommodate growth. We have found out benefit fees do
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85

1 not accommodate growth. We're in Valley Center looking
2 at potentially going out and increasing benefit fees
3 again. And there's a limit that you can increase
4 benefit fees, because there's a limit what people will
5 take or stand.

6 And if you talk to any of the professionals,
7 they'll tell you that you can probably add 50 or \$100 on
8 a taxpayer. But after that, they're not going to go for
9 it any further. And so we get growth, but yet the
10 benefit fees, when you look at them, they're not high
11 enough to accommodate the growth. So that formula of
12 benefit fees, and even when it comes back into a fire
13 district and it's there, it's not going to be -- it
14 won't sustain the growth. And we're going to have
15 growth.

16 I know people, our neighbors in Deer Springs
17 are upset with Stonegate out there. But the fact is
18 that growth is occurring. It's going to continue to
19 occur in the backcountry. And the growth is what's
20 driving the demand for increased service and better
21 services. It's also what's created the higher losses
22 we've had.

23 And then the last item that I see that is
24 essential is not just our funding. Because we've been

25 told that the funding that we've got, that will remain
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86

1 with us. It is not an issue. Our benefit fees will
2 remain with us. Our concern is, what about our assets
3 I've purchased with those funds? I own trucks, fire
4 equipment. And if it goes through the regionalization
5 and I'm suddenly going to be stripped down because
6 there's another 930,000 acres that's got to be covered
7 in this situation. So are they going to start moving my
8 trucks out and moving older trucks in?

9 So one of my guiding principles I'm going to
10 recommend is that basically that our assets remain the
11 same or are replaced with newer or more capable
12 equipment. To me those are the things that we're
13 looking at.

14 What I'm going to be recommending to my board
15 is supporting any type of consolidation. With those, I
16 think we're doing a benefit to the citizens, to our
17 community. And it's one of our responsibilities as
18 board members, is what can I do to benefit my community?
19 Not simply saying no to consolidation. I think it's a
20 wrong approach from that standpoint.

21 On the other thing, though, I think I have to
22 make sure that what I'm doing will benefit the citizens
23 of the community. And if we can hit those marks, then
24 the big issue is what kind of governance structure. And
25 I'll leave that to my board to come up with. That's all
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87

1 I have.

2 Thank you.

3 MR. OTT: Our next speaker is Mike Thometz.

4 That's a wonderful name.

5 MICHAEL THOMETZ: I agree. My name is

6 Mike Thometz. I live in Campo.

7 I have been quite involved with our local fire
8 department, getting the new roof of their building and
9 raising lots of money for them. I also represent a
10 group called Merit. And we're a local land use advocacy
11 group trying to, among other things, get some sensible
12 growth policies for the backcountry.

13 And I do want to comment on -- I guess you're
14 the basic author. I thought the report was extremely
15 well done and very lucid, very understandable. That's
16 not always something you see in reports like this.

17 You know, there's a problem with a report like
18 this, because it's not addressing a single issue.
19 There's about five big issues here. And you're trying
20 to juggle all five, six of them, trying to figure out
21 what's best. And they all go flying off.

22 I want to address governance as the most
23 important thing. Because I think there's a lot there.
24 But let me just address a couple things beforehand.

25 Everybody knows that 80 percent or more of all
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88

1 of the calls in backcountry are medical. They are not
2 fire. Now, everybody knows that the East County
3 Hospital, which was the closest hospital, has closed
4 down. Alvarado's got problems. Everybody's got
5 problems.

6 So one of the things that I haven't heard
7 people talk much about is that, whatever you do, it must
8 be an ALS system. Basic life support is not adequate.
9 It must be advanced life support. Because our health
10 depends on these people.

11 As you get more people out there and
12 particularly people who haven't lived in the
13 backcountry, they are fools in paradise. So you need --
14 and so the cost of going from basic to ALS is fairly
15 small. So I think that is something you really have to
16 do.

17 Secondly, about volunteers. You know, there
18 are all kinds of volunteers. Campo is considered one of
19 the best volunteer fire departments. You know how many
20 volunteers we have that live in the community? Out of
21 the 30 volunteers, we have about three or four.

22 Why are the volunteers out there? They're guys
23 that got out of the training camp that can't get a job
24 because they don't have the experience. So they come
25 out there and work for free, or a volunteer. And after
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89

1 a year and a half, they leave.

2 The volunteers that I hear at these various

3 meetings, these are people that love their community
4 that have been volunteers for 15 or 20 years. And we've
5 got volunteers on the fire board who don't even fight
6 fires anymore. So I think we need a better
7 understanding before you make a decision about who
8 volunteers are and what they are and get the romance out
9 of this. And let's get down to, you know, what really
10 are the volunteers.

11 It is my feeling, based on what I've seen and
12 heard, except it's reserved. You're going to lose your
13 volunteers. If somebody said Warner Springs already
14 lost it, yet they're out there talking about getting a
15 new -- the County is saying we're going to get a new
16 station there. And other stations, we've heard
17 different things about. But I think you need to study
18 that.

19 The third thing is that we know it's all about money.
20 And we know that it's a hard sell. And I'll leave that
21 for another issue. But this is going to require
22 everybody, whatever we decide to do, to pitch in and get
23 this approved. Because without getting Supervisor
24 Jacob's Hollingsworth bill through, or unless the Board
25 of Supervisors finally does something after 30 years of
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90

1 not doing anything, this whole thing is smoke. Because
2 nothing is going to happen. The money is not going to
3 be there. So we're going to have to get people
4 involved.

5 I think when I read this report, I get the
Page 83

6 feelings toward the end of the executive summary that,
7 well, the County could do something immediately. I
8 think timing is not so critical here as, you know, it's
9 years after the fire. And this process is going
10 to take a long time.

11 So I don't think -- I think we want to be
12 careful not to rush into something because we've got a
13 report out there, and we've got to make a decision. We
14 need to make the right decision. Now, I strongly
15 recommend -- in my opinion, the regional fire district
16 is the only way to go. You need something independent.

17 Now, I'm a little familiar with Stonegate.
18 But, you know, there are so many issues. I do not trust
19 the County to do the right thing. I have been in there.
20 We have a general plan that says what the standards are
21 to meet if you've an urban development in the rural
22 area. The County has historically, repeatedly
23 approved -- developments that have never been approved by the
24 General Plan.

25 We had Cliff Hunter, when he was in
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91

1 Mr. Miller's position, I believe, approved a project out
2 there and just shined on the local people. You had the
3 possibility of fire safe councils throughout the entire
4 county. Has the County ever done anything about that?
5 No.

6 Recently, there's been some stuff done, but
7 that part of the County has been a mess. Fire safe

8 councils are, again, something -- had we had the local
9 inspection for brush and things like that out there,
10 there should have been -- making certain that the area around
11 houses is clear. No, we haven't had that.

12 You go down the list of the things that the
13 County could have done in the past, they have not done.
14 And as the lady said, we know the developers are the
15 only clients of the DPLU. And I find it sort of
16 incestuous. It's bad enough -- we go to the County. We
17 say, "We're the public. We want to know what's going
18 on." They say, "We're not going to tell you."

19 We've got the Industry Advisory Council. The
20 public can't go to that. There's all sorts of things
21 you can't find out. And slowly but surely what little
22 access we do have is being taken away. I do not want to
23 see the County with fire as their person who does
24 whatever they say. That is the wrong thing.

25 This department, whatever it is, needs to be an
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92

1 independent, separately elected board. Not the
2 Supervisors. It has to be the regional fire department.
3 That is the only way to go. All these other things,
4 CSA 135, sort of the same kind of thing as the County.

5 So from a timing -- or from a governance point
6 of view, I think that there is only one way to go. It
7 is the safest, securest way for the County. And let me
8 give you one other thing about the County.

9 I always thought -- because I go to a lot of
10 Planning commission things -- there was a secondary

11 egress requirement for a development. Turns out there's
12 no such thing. There wasn't. And I brought this up
13 before the Planning commission. And Bill Taylor says
14 "Oh, no. We don't have to do that. This was for
15 Hidden Meadows who are up on the top -- up off the 15,
16 where there was no way to get out." And the landowners
17 who had a private easement were complaining."

18 After the fires, guess what? They changed the
19 rules. They could have changed the rules on the County
20 building codes to eliminate a lot of things that are
21 proven to be a problem. They didn't do that.

22 So I have a real problem with so many things
23 about the County being in control. There's only one way
24 to do it. Now, I could go on. And I hope that I've
25 made my point.

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93

1 There's one other thing that I see that
2 bothered me. Where's this \$50 million for start-up
3 going to come from? That's like the first hurdle in the
4 race. Now, maybe we sell bonds. We have a good bond
5 rate. Maybe we sell bonds to fund that
6 50-million-dollar jolt that we need right up front. I'd
7 like to see some discussion about that.

8 But the regional fire department is the only
9 way to go. And I really hope you'll consider that very
10 seriously. And I will submit the written comments also.

11 Thank you.

12 MR. OTT: Thank you, Michael.

13 We still have a number of speaker slips
14 remaining here. So why don't I call three more people
15 up.

16 And, again, if you can be as concise as
17 possible. We'd like to get through all of these today.
18 It's 4:20. So let's try to pick up the pace.

19 James Higbee, are you here? I think James is
20 no longer here. I called him earlier.

21 Eric Anderson, Ira Buchalter, and Doug Wilsman,
22 if the three of you can come up. We will start with
23 Eric. And there's a couple chairs on the sidelines
24 there.

25 State your name for the record.

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94

1 ERIC ANDERSON: Eric Anderson, I am the Chair of
2 the Elfin Forest (inaudible) Town Council. I know that
3 through these hearings our community has clearly
4 passionately communicated our desire for the future of
5 our fire department. This fire department is our
6 community. The CSA boundaries define us. And it is the
7 only local agency that provides services to the
8 Elfin Forest area.

9 This solution of CSA 107 would drastically
10 impact one of the real communities in San Diego. And I
11 know you've met many of them the last few days. Tonight
12 our town council meeting will be devoted to the
13 discussion of this proposal.

14 A long, long time ago, back in '86 and '87, I
15 served as a volunteer. And I did survive the '96 fire

16 on my farm. This department has done a fantastic job
17 training and responding to fires, car crashes, and
18 medical emergencies over the last 20 years.

19 We hope that LAFCO can also help us defend the
20 funding of negotiated development agreements. Many of
21 these were negotiated some time ago and are cornerstone
22 for the fire department, providing for its future. We
23 appreciate very much your hosting the hearings and
24 forming the report. It was excellent. And I hope our
25 input is effective.

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95

1 Finally, again, I want to emphasize that our
2 community is firmly and totally committed to supporting
3 our fire department. Please exclude us from the
4 Phase 1.

5 Thank you.

6 MR. OTT: Dr. Buchalter. Did I pronounce that
7 right?

8 IRA BUCHALTER: That's right. I am a
9 physician. My name is Ira Buchalter. I'm also an
10 engineer. I live in Hidden Meadows. And I was drawn to
11 what was happening across I-15 at Stonegate Marion
12 Mountain as a physician.

13 I repeatedly wrote letters to the DPLU warning
14 them of the problems that would occur if a development
15 of that nature was built with no evacuation. And,
16 specifically, I'm referencing smoke inhalation.

17 I'm an otolaryngologist. I have had 30 years

18 of experience and will easily say that young infants who
19 have small airways, asthmatics, the elderly, the
20 infirmed will all die of smoke inhalation if they are
21 left in their houses during a wildland fire or out in
22 the park during a wildland fire.

23 In spite of this, the fire personnel of the
24 DPLU passed and approved a fire protection plan without
25 any reference to the medical consequences or to the
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96

1 letter written by the American Lung Association telling
2 them not to do it. There is no trust, no trust
3 whatsoever in the Department of Planning and Land Use or
4 their fire personnel to make competent decisions when
5 they are against development decisions which also have
6 to be made through that department.

7 I'm very disappointed in our government for
8 what they did. The fire protection plan of Stonegate
9 Marion Mountain, which has been approved by the DPLU,
10 should be requested by all members of LAFCO. They
11 should look at this fire protection plan and see what it
12 encompasses.

13 At the same time they should look at the fire
14 protection plan that was rejected and the letter that
15 was written to the project manager of Stonegate
16 suggesting what was required to have a legitimate fire
17 protection plan. They actually ignored those
18 recommendations. They actually approved the fire
19 protection plan, which could kill 10- to 13,000 people.
20 It's absolutely incredible.

21 Unfortunately, consolidation of the fire
22 districts will take the rights of the people who
23 live in the area and those people who may live in the
24 development and put them under the jurisdiction of those
25 same people who ignore the medical consequences of what
Peterson Reporting, Video & Legal Services

97

1 we had told them would be.

2 Thank you.

3 DOUG WILSMAN: I'm Doug Wilsman of the water
4 board in Ramona.

5 I made up a little spreadsheet here. You can
6 pass this to your folks. It shows that, based on the
7 numbers that are in the Micro Report, that Ramona, if
8 its fire department is swallowed up, will take more
9 money away from the community than is needed. In fact,
10 it will take a million dollars more away from the
11 community than we now spend on the fire department, and
12 we all have to raise our water rates 13 percent to cover
13 the loss.

14 Secondly, I would just like to point out to you
15 that we are in Phase 1 because we have two people on our
16 fire trucks instead of three. So the solution in the
17 Micro Report shows that while we have 30 people of CDF
18 manning our equipment today, we'll only get 31. And if
19 the plan is that you won't lose anything, then we start
20 out with a guarantee of the 30 and somehow one other
21 person, a full-time CDF person can cover three fire
22 trucks 30 days a month. And I think that takes eight or

23 nine. So that's just a couple things.

24 And I'm going to send you a list of some more
25 like that. And I don't need any response today.

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98

1 MR. OTT: Dave, if you could state your full
2 name.

3 DAVE STROHTE: Dave Strohte, S-T-R-O-H-T-E.

4 Well, I'm with Mount Laguna Volunteer Fire
5 Department, been there for almost 20 years. I'm the
6 assistant chief. Also, I have a real job. And that's
7 right across the street here. So it was real easy for
8 me to come on over.

9 You know what our goals are here. And I'm in
10 favor of consolidating the fire departments. And we've
11 had some real good things happen lately. But it's not
12 all fun and games. There's this statement about what's
13 happening right now. And I'll talk a little bit about
14 that.

15 As far as the good news, the department's been
16 blessed with many grants. We've come a long way. Where
17 we are right now is the furthest thing from being
18 consolidated. Many years ago, all volunteer departments
19 were dispatched by one dispatch center. And it was the
20 insurance department. Right now, we're facing --
21 there's a rule -- well, we know the situation we're in.

22 Currently we're working good with all our
23 surrounding agencies. However, at the same time, we're
24 looking at maybe losing one of the agencies that we work
25 excellently with just to the south of us, Pine Valley.

1 They are one of the ones that have elected to take the
2 CDF staffing. And that might be good for the board to
3 make that decision.

4 Lately, with our department we're one of the
5 agencies that joined into this agreement with the
6 County. And it's turned out to be kind of a good thing.
7 We've got some money. \$20,000 came from the County.
8 We've got -- last time we just sent a whole bunch of
9 people down to a paid academy down at Heartland Fire, an
10 excellent academy. Staffing, paid people, volunteers,
11 all going through the same academy. We're getting a
12 rescue, and we're -- and I understand we're getting a
13 lot of water tenders, aren't we? Things like that.

14 Where we are right now, though, I've heard some
15 words used by the chief of DPLU. I've heard another
16 word from another chief as it's time to fight. Last
17 week, I was down there at the Firehouse Museum and
18 firehouse -- doing training. And we get a lot of
19 training. And I ran across Ralph and Ken Miller.

20 We were talking about using four-wheel drive on
21 a unit. And I was talking to Ralph and Ken. "Think
22 about that." Ralph says, "I don't know. If Dennis pisses
23 me off again, you'll get nothing." So now we have --
24 and I do have faith in the people. It's probably one of
25 my shortfalls.

1 The problem is we have damage control that
2 needs to be done right now. And management -- a lot of
3 times when I look at it, I look at my own management. I
4 look at myself. I have made errors. I think it's time
5 for a hope that LAFCO looks at this and doesn't give up
6 hope on consolidating fire departments. I hope it does
7 come through. But there is some damage control that
8 needs to be done.

9 And maybe one of those is like an OES, Office
10 of Emergency Services -- isn't that what they stand
11 for -- to come and take a look at what's going on, see
12 if they can assist with some of the damage control.

13 I know down in Pine Valley -- I don't know too
14 many firefighters that are happy with CDF coming in. I
15 know the board is. The fire department, tonight we're
16 going to be discussing opting out of Phase 1.

17 Thank you.

18 MR. OTT: Thank you, Dave.

19 TIM COSTANZO: Tim Costanzo, C-O-S-T-A-N-Z-O.

20 And we do appreciate LAFCO. You've been very
21 open and forward in all the meetings we've been to with
22 you.

23 I'm just going to make a few points. If DPLU's
24 plan is to be considered, we would like the date for the
25 end of comments to move back to reflect the date of the
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101

1 submittal to the various departments.

2 One other thing is, let the volunteer
3 departments join the program as a volunteer situation.
4 They'll feel like they're not being pushed into these
5 programs. Last week at one of the LAFCO meetings, it
6 was mentioned that Valley Center and Ramona did have
7 volunteers. I'm not sure about Ramona. I don't know
8 the details.

9 Valley Center doesn't have volunteers. Their
10 firefighters, the young ones, are still being paid. The
11 volunteer firefighters are all gone from Valley Center.
12 I think that's the same in Ramona. That would have to
13 be confirmed.

14 As far as the value of volunteers, I want to
15 give one small example. During the Cedar/Paradise
16 Fires, some members of Elfin Forest got together the
17 information of all the hours put in and all the
18 equipment used by the volunteers, just volunteers, for
19 the Cedar/Paradise Fire.

20 And at the lower rates that volunteers would be
21 considered valued and their equipment, that would still
22 approach a million dollars for two weeks worth of work.
23 And the stations in most cases were still being staffed
24 by volunteers in probably 90 percent of the cases.

25 The DPLU program, as they admitted tonight, is
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102

1 a temporary measure. And the long-range plan has not
2 been put in effect. But why has DPLU attached the funds
3 that Elfin Forest has already negotiated for within

4 CSA 107? That doesn't make sense to me. They don't
5 have a program, but they've already attached their funds
6 that we've negotiated with developers on.

7 Thank you.

8 MR. OTT: Please state your name for the
9 record.

10 DALE AMATO: Dale Amato, one of the Board of
11 Directors of the San Diego Rural Fire Protection
12 District.

13 My purpose here is to provide you with a brief
14 synopsis of our experience in the County's fire
15 enhancement program. Our district currently maintains
16 24 reservists and 90 volunteers. Of our 14 stations,
17 only two are paid station systems, which is Jamul, and
18 has two firefighters, two reserves or volunteers. And
19 Descanso currently now has two paid staff.

20 We're in the first year of our three-year
21 program with the County Fire Enhancement Program. And a
22 tangible benefit of that program so far has been to
23 upgrade our Descanso station from a one-person 9-to-5
24 firefighter to now full-time paid staff with additional
25 reservists and volunteers. So we think that, tangibly,
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103

1 we've obviously enhanced our ability to provide service.

2 Our district management has still maintained
3 the same level, despite our entry into the program and
4 our partnership with CDF. Our board makes all the
5 control decisions on how to run the district. I heard
6 there were some issues about that here today.

7 We think that the partnership with CDF and the
8 fire enhancement program is going to benefit the
9 volunteers in a lot of different ways. We think that
10 they're getting now better opportunities for hands-on
11 training through partnership with CDF. Because CDF,
12 full-time paid professional employees are within the
13 district. They're getting a better idea of management
14 and running calls with experienced personnel.

15 Partnership with CDF has benefited our district
16 in a number of different ways. We obviously have
17 increased staffing or the opportunity for increased
18 staffing. The district now has been able to utilize
19 untapped resources such as (inaudible). We've also had
20 CDF take an integral role in our fire management program
21 as well, which we obviously didn't have the staffing to
22 do prior to that.

23 For a number of reasons that I mentioned and,
24 obviously, the standardized training and
25 command-and-control functions, we think that our
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104

1 partnership with CDF has enhanced our district greatly.

2 Thank you.

3 MR. OTT: Dale, before you sit down, in terms
4 of your comments about the volunteer, do you have any
5 knowledge as far as the number of volunteers that your
6 district used prior to the fire enhancement program with
7 the County and then post?

8 DALE AMATO: What I can tell you from my

9 understanding is that we have not had a drop-off of
10 volunteers because of the use of CDF. Our district,
11 like probably a lot of other districts, go through the
12 program, get their -- cut their teeth and move on to
13 somewhere else.

14 We're a very large district, as you know. So
15 volunteers do come and go a lot. But in my experience
16 we haven't lost any volunteers because of the use of the
17 CDF. But I couldn't tell you whether or not we've
18 gained any volunteers.

19 MR. OTT: Thank you.

20 We're trying to gather some information on that
21 particular subject. So anybody -- not necessarily
22 today -- but in the future, before our April 6 deadline,
23 has any hard information on the impact on volunteers, we
24 would like that information. John Traylor is trying to
25 gather that. He's made that request at our previous
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105

1 workshops for hard information on that subject, since it
2 is a thing that has come up during the workshops with
3 respect to some contentions that there are negative
4 impacts on the number of volunteers and so forth.

5 If the following speakers can come forward:
6 Gail Twohy, David Young, and Randy Lyle. We just have
7 about a total of five speakers left.

8 GAIL TWOHY: Gail Twohy.

9 It's apparent us that sustainable funding is
10 insufficient for both the regional Fire Protection
11 District and for the County plan. For this reason, it

12 is unrealistic for LAFCO to approve either option.

13 So I urge LAFCO to recommend the status quo
14 until such time as funding can be secured. And I urge
15 the County to use their 8.5 million in a different
16 fashion. I already see too many problems with the
17 County plan as it stands.

18 When one department turns down a million
19 dollars, there's a problem. When another community is
20 circulating a petition to have their fire department
21 cancel their contract with CDF, there's a problem. When
22 volunteer firefighters are leaving as CDF stands in,
23 there's a big problem.

24 I would like to see the County spend its money
25 on a unified communications system. My understanding is
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106

1 that this was a big source of difficulty during the
2 Cedar Fire. A unified communications system would be a
3 huge step toward consolidating operations. I would like
4 to see the County approach individual fire departments
5 and ask how they could help without strings attached.

6 Each department is unique and has unique needs.
7 Filling in the gaps would have to be more cost-effective
8 than trying to force a one-size-fits-all plan. In this
9 way the County would be building on what's working,
10 rather than tearing things apart.

11 The power of Judo is not in resisting. Is not
12 in resisting, but rather in taking advantage of the flow
13 of energy. I urge the County not to try to change the

14 direction. This is resistance. Rather, I urge the
15 County to lend a helping hand to build on the many
16 strengths of the volunteer fire departments. The
17 momentum's already there. Take advantage of it.
18 Support the spirit of volunteerism and the resulting
19 building of the community.

20 These people are willing to protect their
21 communities at no cost. They do not help in terms of
22 equipment, facilities, et cetera. But they ask for
23 nothing in terms of labor. Theirs is a labor of love.
24 How can the County possibly think of destroying that?
25 It can only result in gain.

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107

1 And as an aside, this commission has said that
2 they support volunteer firefighters, I believe so. DPLU
3 has said the same thing. I'm sorry, but the majority of
4 these three meetings have been people squawking about
5 DPLU. I don't see how we can believe that they truly
6 support volunteer firefighters. It's really
7 overshadowed the Micro Report, which is a shame.

8 MR. OTT: Thank you.

9 DAVID YOUNG: Thank you very much.

10 My name is David Young. And I'm a registered
11 voter and a taxpayer in San Diego County. I'm also a
12 firefighter on a combination department, a paid and
13 volunteer fire department.

14 I've heard some comments with reference to both
15 the difference between a volunteer and a reservist. But
16 the department where I work, we're all paid. We all

17 receive a paycheck, whether it's a stipend or a paid per
18 shift or a coverage fee.

19 The department is Pine Valley Fire Protection
20 District. I'd also like to mention before I proceed
21 with my comments that, as of last night, we presented
22 our fire board with a binding referendum, taking it to
23 the voters, informing them that the items should be
24 taken to the voters of Pine Valley, whether -- either to
25 rescind the signing of the contract and bringing it
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108

1 before the voters or to dissolve the Fire Protection
2 District entirely.

3 I'm here to offer my comments on the findings
4 by LAFCO in the Micro Report that the "region's system
5 for providing fire protection and emergency medical
6 services is dysfunctional," as well as findings and
7 statements in the background and conceptual
8 reorganization studies.

9 I'm a State-certified Firefighter 1. I'm an
10 engineer. I'm a driver/operator. I'm also an EMT who's
11 certified defibrillator and combi tube.

12 I've worked at this department for the past
13 eight years as a paid member and as a volunteer member.
14 And I've experienced the ups and downs of everything
15 that comes along with both sides of the coin. I'm very
16 involved in our Firefighter's Association and have a
17 strong commitment to the community I serve and protect
18 but don't live in.

19 I'm here to voice my opposition to LAFCO's
20 recommended model or one of the models recommended where
21 services are provided through contractual agreements
22 with the California Department of Forestry.

23 My father always said that it's not enough to
24 recognize a problem. You must look for the best
25 solution -- the best resolution, and the best answer.

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109

1 And our opinion in Pine Valley, this is not the best
2 answer. And again, I apologize for the redundancies.

3 In your own background study it states that
4 "CDF is a state agency oriented more toward command and
5 control rather than structural fire protection." In
6 your Micro Report, you state that cost estimates -- that
7 projects would be funded and not financed over time.

8 But in actuality, there is already a projected
9 22.3- to 47.6-million-dollar shortfall between estimated
10 costs and the actual service level chosen, depending on
11 the service level you choose. It's the same funding and
12 resources which would be lowering property taxes or special
13 assessments passed by voters in the district.

14 Keeping in mind Proposition 13 or the
15 subsequent Senate bill, SB-154 regarding property taxes
16 and the limits that are imposed therein, where is the
17 sustained source of revenue coming from? It is all with
18 every agency that's in this room represented or not,
19 funding has always been an issue.

20 Our issues are not how the volunteer is
21 categorized, but goes much deeper than that. In your

22 Micro Report on page 8 you state that CDF costs have
23 significantly escalated in recent years. Cost to retain
24 and enhance the local resources should be examined
25 before committing to a state contractor.

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110

1 Additionally, the Micro Report states if
2 volunteer operations were not aggressively supported by
3 a successor agency, regional resources would definitely
4 decline, and overall costs would increase. In light of
5 the projected shortfall, how can these resources that
6 are existing be supported?

7 From your own Micro Report on page 30, it
8 addresses the dispatching system:

9 "EMD is the standard for dispatching within the
10 entire region, with the exception of CDF. If additional
11 Phase 1 agencies were to contract with CDF for
12 Schedule A or Amador Plans and, as a result, move from
13 Heartland to CDF or Monte Vista dispatching, the human
14 cost from eliminating the EMD from the dispatch service
15 should be evaluated."

16 That would be excellent if it would be
17 evaluated on a fair and level playing field.

18 For CDF to raise the level of dispatch to the
19 standard within San Diego County that they currently
20 enjoy, unspecified additional one-time costs --
21 unspecified additional one-time costs for upgrading
22 communications equipment for adding staffing would be
23 passed on to those contracts agencies.

24 In addition, 9.5 percent of that would be an
25 overhead charge applied by CDF to administer this. It
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111

1 says in your Micro Report on page 9, "The conceptual
2 plan itself would induce a de facto consolidation of
3 services under CDF contracts."

4 And this is the part that I believe disturbs
5 us, as well as a number of other agencies that have
6 stood before you:

7 "Left in place, individual jurisdictions would
8 have few resources, if any, and little ability to
9 exercise discretion over fire protection issues in their
10 district. And actual loss of operational fire control."

11 I heard some comments regarding lack of
12 mechanisms to bring in money, lack of programs that
13 exist. Pine Valley has its own fire mitigation program.
14 We do our own work. We have a number of other
15 resources. We have a State-approved firefighter I
16 academy.

17 I've been on a number of campaign fires. By
18 far, I don't claim to have the wisdom or the expertise
19 that a lot of these gentlemen in the room with the
20 badges that you see wearing have. And I respect that.

21 But I've been on a number of campaign fires:
22 The Pines Fire, the Paradise Fire. I've been on the
23 Cedar Fire and a number of others. And the problems
24 that are facing us now are the problems that faced us
25 long before this came about.

112

1 The answer in Pine Valley in my opinion -- I'll
2 speak for myself. We've met as a whole. The answer is
3 not a crew change or agency replacement or agency
4 outright dissolution. With a local loss of control, we
5 couldn't even imagine that.

6 The answer is not, again, adding another man to
7 our engine. The answer is not adding one other person
8 to a different station. The answer is more engines,
9 more aircraft, more resources. But until we stop
10 throwing little buckets of water at big fires, we'll
11 still experience a loss of lives as well as the property
12 losses.

13 I'll close with this: I've always felt if
14 you're the same person you were yesterday, you're going
15 backwards. And we're doing the same things we've been
16 doing yesterday for a long time. It isn't just the
17 Cedar Fire or the Pines Fire. It's long before that.

18 And, again, I still defer to the wisdom and the
19 experience of the gentlemen who have been there long
20 before I have. But the training that I've received to
21 date and the training that we continue to receive is
22 above State-certified levels.

23 We have a department that has 30 active
24 members, over 20 reserves, and we have a fire board that
25 we have absolutely no faith in; hence, our referendum
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1 asking for the rescinding of the signing of the contract
2 and bringing it before the voters of Pine Valley. I
3 thank you very much for the opportunity.

4 MR. OTT: Thank you.

5 Just a point of clarification, several other
6 speakers have made a similar comment that LAFCO -- or
7 LAFCO staff are advocating or proposing a particular
8 governance model or the contract with the Department of
9 Forestry is completely false. We're not advocating,
10 proposing, recommending anything. We've evaluated the
11 effectiveness of all of the different options.

12 DAVID YOUNG: And we understand that. And we
13 hope that it will be evaluated on a level playing field.

14 MR. OTT: Thank you.

15 Larry, you're going to be forwarding comments
16 as well.

17 What about Tim McCrowy, John Fitch. You've
18 already spoke without a speaker slip. And -- but you're
19 coming forward.

20 JOHN FITCH: I'll be very brief.

21 Hi. John Fitch again. I'm a Pine Valley
22 resident. I'm a firefighter on the fire department.
23 Sometimes I get paid, sometimes I don't. I get up in
24 the middle of the night and go help my neighbors.

25 I think that the reason we're here today, we
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114

1 all I know, is Prop C, the fires that happened in 2003.
2 What I've seen -- and I was hoping that some of the kind

3 members of your commission would have been here today --
4 but some of the things that -- positive changes I've
5 seen since 2003 are the reserve 911 system, Sheriff's
6 Department certification for Helitack by CDF. I see new
7 County and City copters in Pine Valley. Specifically,
8 I've seen the Department of Planning and Land Use come
9 in and take out dead oak trees from residential
10 properties.

11 And also I've seen the Forest Service do a
12 very -- looks like a very well planned-out prescribed
13 burn on the northeast side of town. There's a saddle on
14 the ridge. And they burned both sides of that out last
15 year.

16 As a driver and operator of firefighting
17 equipment, I would like to ask the County to provide
18 vehicle maintenance to the rural fire company. Anything
19 possible for them to provide dependable service without
20 adding new overhead or labor costs or labor resources.

21 As David said, the voters of Pine Valley have
22 submitted a petition to the fire board regarding
23 contracts expended to go into a three-year contract with
24 CDF. At the first meeting that you had, I articulated
25 my positions on that based on your report. And I'm not
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115

1 going to do it again right now. I've been articulating
2 these positions for a long time, and nobody's been
3 listening.

4 Like I said, many strides have been taken since

5 2003. And I'd like to suggest another one to be
6 evaluated in the future, possibly as part of your
7 recommendation or your action: A strategic reserve from
8 existing resources in the county.

9 Obviously, this will require regional
10 authority. We get these wildfires. The only thing
11 that's going to work against them is air power. And it
12 comes and goes depending on funding or who's putting
13 money in at what time. It will be what it will be.

14 We've got the 911. So in the middle of the
15 night, you get a call, you can get out. That's so
16 important. I'll tell you, on the Horse Fire when we saw
17 OES come in, we were at our station and phones were
18 ringing off the hook. And the reserve 911 had been
19 called, and we seen 15 engines come in from OES. We
20 know those guys meant business. It was good.

21 I think, you know, this is a long road. I
22 looked at the report in Sacramento. It's taken them 30,
23 40 years to evolve to where they have. It will be the
24 same way here.

25 So in conclusion, I'd like to just say that
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116

1 many improvements have been made since 2003. And it's
2 my hope that the actions of LAFCO will continue on a
3 sustained, continuous path of improvement toward the
4 best fire and EMS services possible throughout the
5 County. Thank you for your time.

6 MR. OTT: Thank you.

7 And we do have two final speakers, which will

8 conclude the afternoon or evening, depending upon what
9 time it is here.

10 Jeremy Frasca and Randy Scales, our two
11 gentlemen here.

12 JEREMY FRASCA: Good afternoon, Ladies and
13 gentlemen. My name is Jeremy Frasca, F-R-A-S-C-A.

14 I am currently a reserve firefighter for the
15 San Diego Rural Fire Protection District. I've been a
16 reserve firefighter for two and a half years now.

17 I grew up in the community of Jamul. I've
18 witnessed and grown up around the volunteers. I know
19 the meat and potatoes of the whole volunteer.

20 To just kind of break down some barriers,
21 volunteer -- reserve, paid, not paid -- we're all
22 firefighters. We all have the same goal in mind. And
23 what I'm trying to get at is -- I can't articulate my
24 thoughts here. Just the integration of CDF into our
25 program was a little intimidating at first to us, the
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117

1 reserve firefighters. But as it came into effect, it
2 was nothing but open arms from CDF.

3 It's opened a lot of doors for people like
4 myself, trying to move on and become a career
5 firefighter one day and get paid and make this my dream
6 job. Volunteers, it's all heart. They respond from
7 home. My father was a 22-year veteran, volunteer
8 firefighter. This is long before San Diego Rural even
9 existed.

10 What I get out of it and the rest of the
11 reservists get out of it is the training. For instance,
12 take a fire control class, which to have live fire
13 training, most places you go to it's going to cost per
14 person roughly \$350. We have a class coming up, and
15 just because the CDF, who has offered to put the
16 volunteers, it's going to cost, maybe, \$5 a person.

17 It's an opportunity -- it's a very attractive
18 offer to prospective reserve firefighters. Reserves
19 come and go by one or two years. You're going to always
20 have that continuous flow. The volunteers, they're
21 offered the same training. It's just -- it's a great
22 opportunity for them. They come out and -- it's -- I'm
23 sorry. It's kind of off-the-cuff today. I haven't
24 really prepared.

25 I'm thinking back to a story. Since they have
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118

1 integrated the CDF to Descanso, we were able to man a
2 new station 24 hours, seven days a week. We responded
3 to a call at 2:00 a.m. And this was a chest pain call.
4 It was pretty much a cut-and-dry chest pain.

5 And when it was all said and done, we had our
6 patient in the ambulance and talked to the residents
7 that lived at the same place. And they were really
8 taken back by the response time and how quick we
9 responded. They said, "The volunteer station up here
10 usually takes a lot longer. And we were really
11 concerned about that."

12 We had to educate them. This is right after
Page 109

13 the integration. We had to tell them that it's now CDF.
14 We've got volunteer and paid staff up here. Because of
15 CDF, we're able to do this. They were really blown away
16 by that. I think that's huge right there, response
17 times and, basically, just the opportunities that it has
18 to offer for everybody.

19 I think it's a growing opportunity with more
20 people moving out to the backcountry. It's the right
21 thing to do. It's great for everybody. And I think
22 there's been a lot of gain from it.

23 So thank you.

24 MR. OTT: Thank you.

25 Randy, you're our final speaker.

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119

1 MALE SPEAKER: Randy Sales. I'm the CDF
2 Firefighters chapter director here in San Diego. Couple
3 things for clarification.

4 One comment was made that people rotating in
5 and out -- if this were to happen under the CDF contract
6 or in future contracts with the County, that generally a
7 two-year commitment for that employee to transfer into a
8 station, you're going to be there for two years. That's
9 been the standard. And it's not a rotation where every
10 week you see a different captain and you don't know who
11 you're working with.

12 The two-year commitment is there for a reason,
13 for continuity between the staff that's there and to get
14 to know the community and the volunteers and reserves

15 that work in the community.

16 Secondly, one of the other gentlemen made a
17 comment -- that gentlemen from Mount Laguna -- that
18 they're going to be losing their neighbors to the west
19 there in Pine Valley.

20 My question is, where are they going? CDF
21 comes in. They're going to work hand-in-hand with them.
22 That relationship will still been honored with open
23 arms, and the personnel from Pine Valley will still be
24 there to work with the Mount Laguna folks.

25 Talked about volunteers being run out or
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120

1 reserves not being able to have a position or have a
2 purpose there in their communities anymore. We open
3 wide open arms with the volunteers and the reserve
4 programs. We cannot function as well as we should be
5 able to without their help.

6 We are currently operating two -- staffing two
7 career people and a minimum one volunteer or reserve
8 every day in the two stations in San Diego Rural. We
9 also do that in some of the other areas that we have
10 contracts with. This is the big area that people want
11 to focus on, Pine Valley, San Diego Rural, as well as
12 some of the other volunteer agencies.

13 We open the door right open and hold it open
14 for those people to come in and engage in the program,
15 just like they did before. There is no, "You're just a
16 volunteer. Follow us up on the engine behind. If I've
17 got an empty seat, go on board, go with us."

18 If you're standing there and we're doing
19 training and a call comes in and I've got an empty seat,
20 climb on. Let's go. I depend on that volunteer to
21 follow up that engine or staff the station behind us
22 when we're out on other calls. That is part of the
23 program that we value completely and this thing that
24 makes it work.

25 Somebody brought up the point that
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121

1 Valley Center doesn't have volunteers. Those guys get a
2 stipend, and that was the term. They get paid. But
3 they're not career people. So they're there on their
4 own gaining the experience. And they do get some
5 funding for being there. But there's no benefits behind
6 it. There's no huge salary involved with it. They are
7 there to get the experience and training, just like a
8 volunteer reserve would. But they are getting paid a
9 minimal, nominal fee to be there.

10 One of the things that's came up with the whole
11 system is about -- is what is in the best interest of
12 the community. Pine Valley, last month, by their own
13 call logs and records, had 11 days when their fire
14 station was uncovered. Nobody was there to respond.
15 Without doing a call back, which takes time. 11 days.

16 What is in the best interest of your community?
17 To have a career staff there 24/7, seven days a week, or
18 to have your fire station unstaffed for 11 days during
19 the month when nobody might be available to respond?

20

Thank you.

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MR. OTT: Thank you, Randy.

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That concludes the workshop, I think. If there are any questions before we adjourn, now would be the time to raise them, as you're thinking about them.

24

The dates that have been thrown out are Peterson Reporting, Video & Legal Services

122

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April 6th for the comment deadline. We've obviously received a number of verbal comments, which will be incorporated into our process here.

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The next date is May 7th. That's the LAFCO hearing date. It's considered tentative at this stage. But there's more than 50 percent possibility that that date will materialize. So put those dates in your calendar book.

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We've been at this project, I believe, for almost ten years. It's not been overnight. Shirley and I have been working on this issue since 1998, first of all dealing with the funding inequities that plague fire protection in this county. And that evolved into what you have heard today, as far as the different reorganization options we're looking at.

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We value your comments. We appreciate your interest. And if there aren't any questions, I don't see any hands.

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PAULINE HADLEY: I have one. Pauline Hadley. I was reading something in the paper where the federal government brings in a lot of planes when we have had these big fires, and that 2006 was just -- and they're

23 king of getting after us for building in the wildfire
24 urban interface. Because they said from now on they're
25 expecting 2006 to be indicative of what we have in the
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123

1 way of fires. And so the government comes in, too, and
2 they fight all these fires with us? Is that it?

3 MR. OTT: John, do you want to talk about the
4 federal relationship?

5 MR. TRAYLOR: Well, there are U.S. Forest
6 Service lands and there are State-responsibility lands. And
7 both those levels of government certainly provide
8 response to these types of fires. I don't know if that
9 directly answers your question. I was trying to
10 understand --

11 PAULINE HADLEY: We had that Marion Mountain
12 Fire. Does the government come?

13 MR. TRAYLOR: That's SRA land. So from a
14 wildland fire protection standpoint, you'll have a CDF
15 wildland response.

16 PAULINE HADLEY: And is that it? No government?

17 MR. TRAYLOR: CDF represents the State
18 government team.

19 MALE SPEAKER: She's asking federal. And the
20 answer is, yes, they do.

21 PAULINE HADLEY: Okay. I'm asking the wrong
22 person.

23 MR. TRAYLOR: Simple question, simple answer.
24 That was it, I think, that answered her question.

MALE SPEAKER: When there's a large fire -- and
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1 it doesn't have to be significantly large in San Diego
2 County. All levels of government -- state, federal,
3 local, municipal -- fall from agreements from the
4 federal level all the way down help each other out.

5 So there's very rarely that there's a
6 significant fire that does not have multiple agencies
7 from multiple levels of government there.

8 PAULINE HADLEY: Last year we had a lot of
9 those.

10 MALE SPEAKER: Some.

11 MR. TRAYLOR: I misunderstood your question.
12 The gentleman was right. There are tremendous resources
13 that can be deployed through any area of the federal
14 level, state level, and local area.

15 PAULINE HADLEY: And we don't really have an
16 evacuation plan yet for us in San Diego, a template?

17 MR. TRAYLOR: I'd have to defer to DPLU. I'm
18 not sure about that in the unincorporated area. I know the
19 Sheriff's Department now has an evacuation plan.

20 Evacuation is generally a responsibility of
21 local law enforcement. I know the Sheriffs have worked
22 long and hard on evacuation plans, which place them to
23 the reserve 911 system for early notification. Whether
24 there's a policy or not from the Department of Land Use,
25 I'd have to defer that to Office of Emergency Services,

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1 completed through OES.

2 MR. OTT: Thank you everybody. It is after

3 5:00. Drive safely.

4 (Whereupon the meeting was adjourned at

5 5:15 p.m.)

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