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LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION

**Transcript
LAFCO Meeting - Agenda Item 9
End-of-Year Update
Reorganization of Fire Agencies - Phase I
December 3, 2007**

***San Diego Local Agency Formation Commission
1600 Pacific Highway, Room 452
San Diego, California 92101
(619) 531-5400***

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1 SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA - MONDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2007

2 --oOo--

3 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: We now move on to Item
4 Number 9. I know we have a staff report on this item. Once
5 again, thank you firefighters and the other related fire
6 people who are here today to hear this discussion and
7 presentation. I must say that this is a rather weighty
8 project that our staff has taken on. The staff report that
9 we've received is excellent. Everything we've asked our
10 staff to do, they've done, including going back and
11 revisiting issues that we've brought forward; so what you'll
12 be saying and hearing today is a culmination of all that
13 work that our staff has provided for us; so with that, Mr.
14 Ott.

15 EXECUTIVE OFFICER OTT: Thank you Mr. Chairman and
16 Commissioners. I'd like to make just a few opening remarks
17 before I turn things over to Shirley Anderson and John
18 Traylor; they will be providing the staff report on this
19 item. You have a picture that is on each of the monitors as
20 well as the screen in back of us here at the dais, and I
21 think that photograph dramatically places what we will be
22 talking about this morning in the proper perspective, and
23 that is that rural fires are an urban threat, and they not
24 only spread to the urbanized communities that we can readily
25 think of, such as: Escondido, Rancho Bernardo, Scripps

1 Ranch, even to Del Mar and Solana Beach. This was unheard
2 of years ago. And that is producing havoc in a lot of areas
3 in terms of automatic aid agreements, in terms of
4 reciprocity between agencies that are better funded in this
5 county, not necessarily well funded, but better funded in
6 terms on how they are helping calm this firestorm. And that
7 probably will become a bigger and bigger issue. There is
8 also a critical emergency medical services issue in this
9 county. In the back-country, well over 75% of the calls -
10 day-in and day-out - are for emergency medical services, not
11 necessarily structural fire protection. So there's a
12 combination of issues, and we've been trying to solve this
13 problem over the past several years. And the Commission in
14 May 2007, initiated and approved the consolidation and
15 reorganization of fire agencies that would name the County
16 as the successor to about 1.5 million acres of underserved
17 and unserved territory. That's about two-thirds of
18 unincorporated San Diego County, which either has no
19 structural fire protection by a local fire agency, or is
20 provided fire protection by an under-funded agency. Four
21 hundred thousand acres of that total that I mentioned is
22 within local fire districts, but we have classified them as
23 being under-funded. So the task before your commission
24 today, is to consider the recommendations of the LAFCO
25 subcommittee. The subcommittee consists of Supervisors Horn

1 & Jacob, you Mr. Chairman, as well as Commissioner Menshek.
2 That subcommittee was tasked with the responsibility of
3 helping implement this reorganization project. So we are
4 presenting today to you, the subcommittee's work, which the
5 subcommittee has reviewed and approved. It also includes
6 terms and conditions of reorganization. They have also been
7 looking at the funding equation, which is the big issue
8 here, and rather going into that with any detail, I would
9 defer to Shirley and John to give you the specifics. We
10 have a number of speaker slips that we need to take and then
11 your Commission should deliberate on whether or not this
12 package that the LAFCO subcommittee has been reviewing,
13 should be conveyed and delivered to the Board of
14 Supervisors. So with that I'd like to turn things over to
15 Shirley and she will give you the staff presentation.

16 MS. ANDERSON: Good morning, Mr. Chairman and
17 members of the Commission. Reorganization of Structural
18 Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services was
19 conditionally approved in May by this body. Once all the
20 conditions that the Commission placed on approval are
21 satisfied, it will return to the Commission for final
22 ratification. The reorganization has undergone a series of
23 modifications since it was first introduced to LAFCO by the
24 Board of Supervisors, who proposed the formation of a
25 regional fire protection district over the entire

1 unincorporated area. From there it was modified by an
2 alternative proposal that was put together by the fire
3 community, by the Fire Chiefs' and District Fire Chiefs'
4 Associations that bifurcated the reorganization into two
5 phases. We've been working on Phase I since the Commission
6 approved that. Modification of Phase I was modified to take
7 some of the agencies in Phase I and place them in Phase II.
8 Other conditions, the conditions that the Commission placed
9 on the approval in May concerned finalizing the boundaries
10 after establishing the list of agencies that would be
11 dissolved and merged into the new agency. It also included
12 some ministerial items that your staff has been taking care
13 of. It included developing terms and conditions for the
14 reorganization, things such as transfer of the property tax
15 increments, transfer of a career personnel from the
16 dissolved agencies, transfer their personnel rights,
17 transfer of obligation and resources to the new fire
18 protection district, and it also was conditioned upon
19 finding a secure on-going funding source for the new agency.
20 The majority of the conditions have been satisfied and staff
21 will be today recommending that the Commission approve those
22 draft terms and conditions which have been included with
23 your report and have been reviewed by the subcommittee. The
24 boundaries of the new agency have been finalized and
25 reviewed by the subcommittee. There are seven agencies that

1 would be included: the East County Fire Protection District,
2 the Pine Valley Fire Protection District, the San Diego
3 Rural Fire Protection District, and four county service
4 areas - the County Service Areas (CSAs) are special
5 districts that are dependent to the County; the Board of
6 Supervisors are their board of directors. The CSAs are
7 Boulevard, Campo, Mount Laguna, and San Pasqual.
8 Altogether, these agencies plus an additional nine-hundred,
9 about 944,000 acres would be consolidated together to form a
10 regional fire agency. Governance of this regional agency,
11 as approved by the Commission in May, would be under County
12 Service Area 135. CSA 135 already exists; it doesn't have
13 to be created, it's not a new bureaucracy. A zone within 135
14 would be empowered with the authority to provide structural
15 fire protection and emergency medical services. The zone
16 would duplicate the boundary of Phase I. The one
17 outstanding condition that has not been satisfied is the
18 funding source. Once the boundary was established and we
19 knew exactly what agencies would be dissolved, we will be
20 able to determine what the property tax transfer and special
21 assessment benefit transfer would be, and we could develop
22 the cost of providing services within the boundary that was
23 finally established. We have one slide, which I'll show
24 you, which give us the numbers...here we go. Developing the
25 cost was not an abstract exercise. The cost themselves give

1 us a profile of characteristics of what this district would
2 do, what it would deliver. The subcommittee reviewed and
3 approved - the majority approved - that the minimum service
4 level of this new regional agency would be 3 on-duty
5 delivered by career personnel plus volunteers. Volunteers
6 are a very important component of the reorganization;
7 without the volunteer contributions, the cost for the entire
8 service delivery accelerates substantially. There are two
9 service levels, basic life support and advance life support.
10 Again, these are at 3 on-duty career, combination career and
11 volunteer. The operational cost for such an agency, at
12 basic life support are about \$25.6 million, and advance life
13 support are about \$26.4 million. The off-setting revenues
14 that would support these costs are property tax (\$1.6
15 million) that would be the property tax that would flow from
16 the seven agencies that would be dissolved. The 944,000
17 acres that would also be developed in this regional agency
18 would bring no tax source to the new agency. There is no
19 public funding being spent there now, so nothing would
20 automatically transfer to the new agency. There's also a
21 special assessment revenue in the amount of \$2.5 - \$2.6
22 million. About half of that special assessment revenue can
23 be contributed to East County Fire Protection District,
24 which just recently the voters in East County approved a new
25 assessment of about \$1.3 million. Altogether, when you take

1 the revenues of about \$4.2 million away from the cost, we
2 still have \$21 - \$22 million dollars of costs that has to be
3 funded for the new agency. One of the stipulations sets the
4 exception of the reorganization is that any funding for the
5 new district be on-going stable funding. We've never looked
6 at grants, and the Commission has never looked at one-time
7 funding. A basic principle of reorganization was that fire
8 protection services in the unincorporated area should be
9 supported by on-going funding. So anything that we looked at
10 to build this gap must be of a permanent nature. The county
11 in recent years has funded fire protection in the
12 unincorporated area through a fire enhancement program of
13 about \$8.5 million dollars. This is for equipment and funds
14 Cal-Fire contracts to have Cal-Fire presence in certain
15 areas of the unincorporated area. There has been discussion
16 if amount of county property tax increments could be
17 transferred to the new agency in this amount that would form
18 part of this gap funding. With the \$8.5 million, there's
19 still about \$13.7 at the Advance Life Support Level that
20 would have to be funded. The Commission's approval in May,
21 gave the Executive Officer directions to transfer this
22 request to the Board of Supervisors to consider the transfer
23 of the fire enhancement fund amount permanently to the new
24 agency, and also to consider funding for the rest of the
25 gap. There are other funding considerations and

1 possibilities under discussion; the Hollingsworth bill,
2 which is now a 2 year bill is out there. That probably
3 can't be looked at for immediate relief. There's also the
4 discussion of parcel tax or sales tax, perhaps, in
5 conjunction with areas outside of Phase I. At this point
6 however, this condition for funding is the only outstanding
7 condition. I'm going to let John give you some more
8 information on how the service costs were developed. They
9 were reviewed by the subcommittee, and the majority of the
10 subcommittee concurred with the way the costs were developed
11 and what service levels would be established. And John will
12 let you know that, and then I'll return with the final
13 recommendations. John?

14 MR. TRAYLOR: Thank you Shirley. The approach for
15 assessing costs for the operation of the fire department,
16 whether it be dependent or independent, the methodology was
17 a change from a previous method used by Karl Bauer in which
18 an assessment for cost was developed on the highest
19 personnel cost - highest method cost. It relates back to
20 the concept of the \$154 million dollar annual cost for
21 providing service. That was the total unincorporated area.

22 The methodology we used this time was to take the median
23 cost, that is take the highest cost of personnel and the
24 lowest cost of personnel and find the median and use that as
25 a cost assessment for all of the functions or providing fire

1 and EMS service. Working with the subcommittee of the
2 division here, we narrowed the service level to 3-BLS first
3 responder and 3-ALS first responder. I can't over
4 emphasize, the value of the volunteer programs, and these
5 costs projections takes full value of the viable volunteer
6 programs that are in place, provides support for them on-
7 going service needs, materials, supplies. In cases where
8 you don't have the BLS or ALS level of service provider, it
9 does provide embedding if you will, that service level to
10 work with the volunteers and embrace those volunteer
11 programs. The cost were developed based on those two
12 service level scenarios, including the personnel cost,
13 identifying all the functions of structural fire protection
14 and EMS service. The budget was developed that reflects the
15 \$25.6 million or \$26.5 million service level cost. I'd be
16 glad to answer any questions that you may have on the cost,
17 but it is a reasonable approach and is in the median if you
18 will, of all those cost figures within the San Diego region.

19 Thank you.

20 MS. ANDERSON: As John has explained to you how
21 these cost were developed and exactly what they stand for.
22 What they don't tell us is how this service will be
23 delivered. We know that it would be 3 on-duty
24 career/volunteer combinations at the Advance Life Support or
25 Basic Life Support level, but we don't know how the delivery

1 would be organized. That would be an issue that the new
2 agency would decide. They could decide to retain all local
3 fire agencies, they could decide to retain Cal-Fire on a
4 contract basis, they could decide to contract with other
5 agencies. For instance, an example would be in the
6 northwest corner of the county, in the Deluz area, it's
7 reasonable to expect that both Cal-Fire and North County
8 Fire Protection District would respond to a request for
9 proposal to provide services in that area. But again, all
10 of the service delivery issues that the level that the
11 Commission establishes will be decided by the new agency.
12 So, with the funding as the only outstanding condition that
13 needs to be satisfied, the recommendations of your staff
14 today, that are contained on page six of your report are to
15 approve the terms and conditions that were reviewed by the
16 subcommittee; accept the reorganization subcommittee's
17 recommendation that service be 3 on-duty at the ALS level;
18 accept the estimated costs that were developed that were
19 developed for delivering services at that level; and direct
20 the Executive Officer to forward the Commission's
21 reorganization to the Board of Supervisors for activation of
22 structural fire protection and emergency medical services
23 within CSA 135 - this is an action that is required - and to
24 secure appropriate funding for regional fire protection
25 services in unincorporated San Diego county. That concludes

1 our report.

2 COMMISSIONER VANDERLAAN: Thank you. Are there
3 any questions for staff?

4 COMMISSIONER REXFORD: Yeah. Well first off I
5 wanted to know how many people were on the subcommittee.

6 COMMISSIONER VANDERLAAN: There were four of us.

7 COMMISSIONER REXFORD: Ok. One of the comments I
8 heard was, and I don't know if I misheard that, pertained to
9 sales tax. Will there be a sales tax on cities or is that
10 something you're looking at and is that all the cities in
11 San Diego County?

12 MS. ANDERSON: Among the options that are out
13 there, that could be pursued, would be sales tax increase.

14 COMMISSIONER REXFORD: On what cities? All the 18
15 cities or just...

16 MS. ANDERSON: Yes. It's an option that needs to
17 be discussed. It's just laying out what possibilities.
18 There could also be a transfer perhaps from the County
19 general funds. There could be - as an alternative - could
20 be a sales tax that would have to be voted by the voters of
21 San Diego County, and a sales tax I believe Counsel would
22 have to be a county-wide sales tax increase?

23 LEGAL COUNSEL SMITH: I believe that you're
24 talking about setting up an authority to provide a sales tax
25 under that particular section, it would be county-wide, yes.

1 MS. ANDERSON: There are no details that have been
2 worked out on this. We're just presenting what options
3 could be pursued.

4 COMMISSIONER REXFORD: And right now we don't know
5 where the funding is coming from. So we're just looking at
6 consolidating before the money comes?

7 MS. ANDERSON: The Commission conditioned final
8 ratification of this fire agency on finding on-going secure
9 funding. So, it will not be ratified until funding is in
10 place.

11 COMMISSIONER REXFORD: Ok, so we're just going to,
12 right now, go through the motions until we receive the
13 money. We're approving it, but if we don't get the money,
14 then can we do it? Can it consolidate?

15 MS. ANDERSON: That's a condition that the
16 Commission placed on this.

17 COMMISSIONER HORN: Betty, I'd like to let you
18 know, I was on the committee. We were not unanimous in
19 this. I brought up objections. You'll hear some of those
20 later. Funding is a big issue. So if you'll notice on the
21 map, every north county department opted out of this. So
22 this is basically an east county district.

23 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Mr. Ott, did you have
24 anything to add on the question?

25 COMMISSIONER REXFORD: My other question, if I

1 could follow-up Mr. Chairman, then this is not unanimous
2 from all the north county, east county, all the counties
3 that we're dealing with. Today we got letters not everybody
4 wanting to be in this, and we'll hear from them today?
5 Correct?

6 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Yes. Ms. Rexford, we have
7 several people speaking.

8 COMMISSIONER REXFORD: Ok. Well I just wanted to
9 kind of get that out, because when I hear cities being taxed
10 and they pay taxes already for fire service, that kind of
11 concerns me.

12 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Even though there's only one
13 piece that's missing, it's a rather big one. And that's
14 "follow the money." So it's a matter of how we get there
15 and that's a big reason that our commission needs to move
16 this forward, is so that those issues could be discussed at
17 a different forum. Basically, the Board of Supervisors.

18 COMMISSIONER REXFORD: I'd like to listen to the
19 speakers, if we have them.

20 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Commissioner Jacob?

21 COMMISSIONER JACOB: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Just
22 a couple of questions. First of all on the funding, do
23 those number include the capital cost?

24 MR. TRAYLOR: They do not.

25 COMMISSIONER JACOB: And what are the capital

1 cost?

2 MS. ANDERSON: I think it's \$37 million.

3 COMMISSIONER JACOB: And that includes, just
4 basically?

5 MS. ANDERSON: Station upgrades, on all stations
6 that are currently out there including the newest one that
7 was just added in Otay Mesa. Most of them will all have
8 crew area improvements. In some cases there will be
9 entirely new stations in place. Warner Springs will have
10 new stations that replace the ones that are currently
11 closed. That comes to \$37.3 million.

12 COMMISSIONER JACOB: And Mr. Ott, in my
13 understanding of this proposal that we have before us is
14 that no area loses anything. In other words, any special
15 assessments, any stations, manpower, whatever exist, any
16 particular area stays in that area. No one loses anything.
17 So there's no personnel, no taxes, nothing that's
18 transferred from area to area. Is that correct?

19 EXECUTIVE OFFICER OTT: That is correct. The
20 terms and conditions provide a legal mechanism for enforcing
21 such a policy matter; but beyond the terms and conditions,
22 beyond the policy, an important footnote that your
23 Commission made to its action in May, was that no area would
24 experience a degradation of services. That's really the
25 part of the issue here, is that what we've put together is a

1 plan to improve services in the county and not at the
2 expense of better funded agencies. So there are agencies
3 that have voted in special taxes and so forth. For special
4 purposes, those special assessments and taxes would be
5 retained. And on top of that, areas that do not have the
6 benefit of taxes would also experience no degradation of
7 services. Volunteers are another issue too. We have put
8 together a legal document that would be embodied in the
9 terms and conditions that would bolster and nurture the
10 volunteer base that exists in this county so that if
11 anything, volunteers would become more important for fire
12 operations. There's a whole host of conditions that we've
13 made that would guarantee, at minimum, that services not be
14 degraded. On the other side of the equation services will
15 be improved. One comment about the finances, we've made no
16 recommendation on which form of financing should be
17 considered by the Board of Supervisors. We think that that
18 is a matter for the Board to consider and we have not
19 expressed a preference for any one method of financing.

20 COMMISSIONER JACOB: Thank you, that was a little
21 more than I asked for, but just one more question...it's on
22 process then. This went to the subcommittee from LAFCO, and
23 this subcommittee, 3 out of 4 of the subcommittee members
24 are recommending this today to move forward. And as I
25 understand, page 6, those are the recommendations. So this

1 is not the end, but this is basically the end of LAFCO's
2 work at this particular point and time? Is that safe to
3 say? And then the idea here is to move it onto the Board of
4 Supervisors to basically finish the work?

5 EXECUTIVE OFFICER OTT: That would be correct.
6 This is the final step in the process for LAFCO, with the
7 exception of ratification after the Board of Supervisors
8 takes whatever action it would take. We're anticipating that
9 that ratification could occur as early as Mid-2008.

10 COMMISSIONER JACOB: So this could come back to
11 LAFCO then.

12 EXECUTIVE OFFICER OTT: This would come back for
13 ratification. What we are trying to do here today is to
14 move this out of LAFCO to set in motion a sequence of events
15 that need to occur under the law for the board to accept the
16 responsibility of activating its fire and EMS
17 responsibilities for County Service Area 135.

18 COMMISSIONER JACOB: So this is not our final time
19 in looking at this. It will come back to us, and I think
20 that that's important for everybody to understand.

21 EXECUTIVE OFFICER OTT: Correct.

22 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Commissioner Rexford.

23 COMMISSIONER REXFORD: I have a follow-up question
24 about manpower and staffing. There would be nothing as we
25 go through this, but what happens in the future when we get

1 the money? Right now we're not going to touch the
2 volunteers, the staffing, and manpower and the things that
3 are happening now, correct?

4 COMMISSIONER HORN: No we're going to boil this
5 frog at a slow simmer so that it doesn't know it's coming.

6 COMMISSIONER REXFORD: Burn what?

7 COMMISSIONER HORN: We're going to boil this frog
8 at a slow simmer so that it doesn't know it's coming.

9 COMMISSIONER REXFORD: So are you the frog? I'm
10 asking questions to follow-up to make sure that there will
11 be no loss of manpower and staffing as we go along with
12 this. We don't know what the future details are though,
13 right?

14 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: That's correct. Are there
15 any other comments? Commissioner Pocklington.

16 COMMISSIONER POCKLINGTON: Thank you Mr. Chairman.
17 I think the thing that we have to remember why we are here.
18 We're here to find ways to save lives and save property.
19 And we're working through, and we look at the two fires that
20 we've had, and we did a much better job on this last fire,
21 but we still lost lives and we lost over sixteen hundred
22 homes. And one of the things, Item 6 Mr. Chairman on the
23 recommendation is that we have to go in front of the Board
24 of Supervisors to lay out our plan. I think the one thing
25 we need to know, and I don't know these figures, is what was

1 the total loss of these two fires? How many people were
2 lost, how many buildings, what was the total value of those
3 buildings and property? And the other things, my
4 understanding is that when you lose a house that has been
5 burned to the ground, you no longer pay taxes on that
6 improvement. Isn't that correct? And we should know the
7 value of taxes that we have lost over these years, because
8 my understanding is that from the previous fires there are
9 people having rebuilt their homes. We need to know all
10 those figures, we make the presentation, and I think it
11 would be dramatic knowing the figures of that and help move
12 this to the Supervisors and move this through a successful
13 course. Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Yes, Mr. Menshek.

15 COMMISSIONER MENSHEK: I'll just reserve my
16 comments until after the public forum.

17 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Any other comments from the
18 commissioners? Now before we, we do have several speakers,
19 I think Mr. Ott made this comment and his remark is that
20 we're focused on the wild-land fires that just occurred.
21 Obviously a great loss, great disruption for our community
22 with all the people who were evacuated. I know in our
23 community, there are letters to the editor that are
24 continuing about why people were evacuated, why they
25 couldn't come back. So there are a lot of problems related

1 to these fires, but I think we have to stay focused on the
2 fact that seventy-five percent or more of the activities are
3 related to emergency medical services. That is a big
4 component of this proposal and that's why our subcommittee
5 looked at raising the bar, if you will, to advance life
6 support. So as we're going through this, certainly focusing
7 on the fire, let's also consider the day-to-day activities
8 that our firefighters and emergency medical personnel do.
9 With that we'll move to speakers. When you come up, if
10 you'll identify yourself with name and address and also let
11 us know whether you're speaking as an individual or as part
12 of an organized presentation so that we can give the correct
13 timing. There's 3 minutes per individual comment, and 7
14 minutes for an organized presentation. So with that our
15 first speaker would be David Burk, followed by August Ghio.

16 CHIEF DAVID BURK: Mr. Chairman, Commission.
17 Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you as President
18 of the County Fire Chiefs' Association. My name is David
19 Burk, address is 8054 Allison Avenue, City of La Mesa, and I
20 would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff for
21 all the work they've done. If you notice a four-year
22 project that's come forward and right now the last hurdle in
23 this is the financing, which was expressed at the very
24 beginning of this project, was sustainable on-going funding.
25 And we knew that was going to be the big piece, and here we

1 are. A lot of work has gone into this to get us to this
2 point. We appreciate all the work and the support of LAFCO
3 staff. And the subcommittee, we would like to - as a county
4 chief - support the Substantially Similar Proposal (SSP) and
5 say that sustainable ongoing-funding needs to be in place.
6 We need this to move forward so that we could find that
7 funding for those agencies that are in Phase I that want to
8 move forward. It's time to move forward and we need to get
9 it onto the next piece. I would like to say that part of
10 this is about reciprocity and currently in the
11 unincorporated area of the county there is reciprocity in
12 service. Cities, the other well-funded districts, send
13 resources into the county and get nothing back as fire
14 service or EMS in this. And cities and districts are
15 looking at this funding and contemplating whether or not to
16 bill the county for services provided; because it isn't
17 reciprocal as it is with our automatic and mutual aid. So
18 with that, I'd just like to again say let's move this
19 forward and thank you for all your work.

20 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Thank you Chief Burk. Were
21 there any questions?

22 COMMISSIONER JACOB: Just a quick question Mr.
23 Chairman. Thank you Chief Burk for coming down. The Fire
24 Chiefs' Association, does the Fire Chiefs' Association
25 represent fire districts throughout the county including

1 north county?

2 CHIEF DAVID BURK: That's correct.

3 COMMISSIONER JACOB: And you're representing all
4 of those chiefs and those agencies?

5 CHIEF DAVID BURK: I am representing the San Diego
6 County Fire Chiefs' Association, though there will be a
7 speaker for the Districts' Association as well.

8 COMMISSIONER JACOB: Thank you very much.

9 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Thank you. Commissioner
10 Rexford.

11 COMMISSIONER REXFORD: I think that my question
12 was answered, that he represents all the county in San
13 Diego. Was the vote unanimous?

14 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: The vote from your Chiefs'
15 Association on this issue?

16 CHIEF DAVID BURK: As you know with most large
17 groups, there is a great difficulty in getting a unanimous
18 approval.

19 COMMISSISONER REXFORD: What was the vote?

20 CHIEF DAVID BURK: We rarely have everybody at a
21 meeting, so we go with the consensus. It was an
22 overwhelming consensus, but it wasn't unanimous. I would
23 give you a six to four or five vote or anything like that.

24 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Thank you chief. August
25 Ghio.

1 CHIEF AUGUST GHIO: My name is August Ghio, I'm a
2 fire chief with the San Miguel Consolidated Fire Protection
3 District. I live at 311 Juan Calle Duro, Jamul, and my
4 office is at 2850 Via Orange Way in Spring Valley. I also
5 am the Vice President of the San Diego County Fire Chiefs'
6 Association, and Vice President of the Fire Districts'
7 Association. I can tell you that when we voted on this, it
8 was at least a two-thirds majority vote in favor of
9 supporting the LAFCO proposal. And that is because we are
10 working towards the same end. The San Diego County Fire
11 Chiefs' and the Fire Districts' Association were working
12 since 2004 on the substantially similar proposal to get to
13 this point. We believe in consolidation. Also, as you've
14 heard in the past, the most pressing concern is really the
15 on-going sustained funding; and that's why it's so important
16 to vote this forward to the County Board of Supervisors so
17 we can get that piece in place. That's what's going to make
18 this machine work. What we also like about the LAFCO
19 proposal is that it does open up the local competition, the
20 ability to compete for local control against the Schedule A
21 contract that CDF now holds. That's a prime piece. We've
22 also been up for that. We believe that we can do it well,
23 and that if local areas can fight for that, it's important.
24 We also like that the local agencies who are seeking to
25 consolidate with neighboring jurisdictions, outside of this

1 process, still have the ability to do that. And that's
2 important for local jurisdictions. And as I said earlier,
3 there is no harm in this plan to any existing jurisdictions.
4 We are concerned recently, with what we've read in the
5 newspaper and seen on the television, that there's a new
6 plan that's coming forward. It's a good plan, I will say
7 that. From what I know of it, it's a good plan; but any new
8 plan should be looked, and how well can it work with the
9 LAFCO Phase I plan. Because they're not usually exclusive.
10 Also, since both plans are good, we have to consider what
11 the original intent was of this LAFCO enhancement of fire
12 protection and emergency medical services. And that was to
13 improve what we do ninety-nine percent of the time. Eighty-
14 three percent of our responses are medical aid, virtually
15 county-wide; probably across the United States. Most of us
16 do about five percent of firefighting and a small percentage
17 of that is wildland firefighting. What this plan does is
18 improve the daily operations for fire, rescue, and emergency
19 medical services. That's critical to know, and critical to
20 support. That's why the Fire Districts' and the County
21 Chiefs' support it. Combining any new plan with the LAFCO
22 plan can only enhance and improve the LAFCO plan. So let's
23 not go forward with a new plan without maintaining the LAFCO
24 plan. Again, we do support it. Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Thank you Chief Ghio. Any

1 questions for Chief Ghio? Thank you. Next speaker will be
2 Scott Walker followed by Kevin Dubler.

3 CHIEF SCOTT WALKER: Good morning Mr. Chair and
4 honorable LAFCO Commission. My name is Scott Walker and my
5 address is 4900 Bonita Road, Bonita California. However, I
6 am speaking as an individual and I'd like to think that I am
7 speaking as an individual that represents thirty years of
8 experience of fire service. My points have been reiterated
9 by you Mr. Chairman and also by Michael Ott, as far as the
10 importance of our day-to-day service. These fires do seem
11 to bring back the importance and the focus on the wildland
12 side of this; but this issue really has a lot to do with
13 structure protection and EMS protection out in the
14 underserved areas. And one thing that I wanted to, the
15 point that I wanted to bring up was the fact that in my
16 reading and following back to these fires - going back to
17 also the Cedar Fire - it's very clear in both federal and
18 state law that the responsibility for structural protection
19 fires falls within the realm of local government. Thank you
20 very much.

21 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Thank you Chief Walker.
22 Kevin Dubler.

23 CHIEF KEVIN DUBLER: I am Kevin Dubler, and I
24 represent Julian-Cuyamaca Fire Protection District. I live
25 at 2020 (in audible), up in Julian. We've been going about

1 this for about the last four years since we've first started
2 working with the staff of LAFCO. The immediate problem four
3 years ago was funding. We're still at that crossroads. So
4 any project, any proposal we come up with, I kind of
5 consider it half-baked until we get some funding. And it
6 has to be sustainable, it has to be permanent. So Zone 8
7 chiefs were looking at this and decided, you know, we need
8 to do something to help in our communities, to raise the
9 level of service from our fire agencies. And we do have
10 about, in our district, we're about eighty-five percent
11 medical also. We run a ALS ambulance that covers three of
12 the districts in the back country. In viewing this, we
13 realized that it may be real tough to get medics to work.
14 We're proposing a stipend, and there will be somebody,
15 Dennis Sherman will talk about our proposal in a minute.
16 But our proposal is half-baked also. And the reason it's
17 half-baked is that we don't have the funding. What we're
18 proposing is to minimize and include the volunteers with the
19 county fire enhancement money that's already out there; by
20 reassessing and reapplying the money in another direction,
21 we would have the money right now to go forward with our
22 proposal. That proposal can merge right into Phase I when
23 the funding finally comes available. Cause I believe it
24 will over a period of years, and we're all for the
25 consolidation. The reason Julian-Cuyamaca asked to be out

1 of it is the funding. We don't have the funding and you're
2 wanting people to join an organization or a fire agency that
3 does not have a fully baked plan. When you get to that
4 point, we would be glad to be into that consolidation and we
5 would gladly turn over our funding to that consolidation.
6 So when Dennis comes up, pay close attention to what he's
7 saying because it does come from already available funds,
8 and we don't have to get new funding. Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Thank you Chief Dubler.
10 Next speaker will be Mary Schoepfer followed by Barbara
11 Collis.

12 MARY SCHOEPFER: I'm Mary Schoepfer. I live at
13 40749 Old Hwy 80 in Boulevard. I'm representing myself as
14 resident. I was the chairperson of the Boulevard Fire. I
15 can tell you right now, just from looking at the station,
16 the emergency medical services are not being delivered
17 because there's no one there. There's simply no one there.
18 No one's running calls. You can look at the information
19 department and they'll tell you how many times of calls
20 they've gotten. If it weren't for CDF and the Fire
21 Enhancement money, we wouldn't have anybody. They'd have to
22 come in from Campo or Pine Valley. There's no one in
23 Jacumba. This is bad, this is really bad. Getting away
24 from fire, I've helped with this program that Dennis and
25 Kevin put together. It's feasible. It'll work. I held the

1 money, I know how the money flows. That could work, but we
2 need to get to the next step. We need to erase the lines.
3 Not Campo, not Boulevard, not Jacumba; we need to get those
4 lines away and say we're going to deliver this service to
5 these people. And that'll work. Give them the opportunity.

6 These guys work on a shoe string. They've been working on
7 a shoe string for years. And they know how to stretch a
8 dollar. Please give them the opportunity. Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Thank you Mary. Thank you
10 for your dedication to this issue. Barbara Collis followed
11 by Dennis Sherman.

12 BARBARA COLLIS: My name is Barbara Collis. I
13 live at 3689-190 Avocado Village Court in La Mesa, the
14 unincorporated area. I have been following the whole
15 process of LAFCO's fire protection plan for four years now.
16 I'm actually representing the East County League of Women
17 Voters as an observer. Our league does have a fire policy,
18 which is very minimal. We are in the process right now of
19 updating so that we can present it to the county people and
20 then voters to get support. I think that one of the
21 important things you have, is and I see missing, is many
22 people don't even really know that all the work that you
23 have done. The people that are in the firefighting groups
24 and all have done a marvelous job, your Commission has done
25 marvelous job, and LAFCO has done an outstanding job in

1 preparing this material. The Thursday before the fire, this
2 last fire, Diane Jacob and Chief Ghio spoke to our league
3 group, which was attended by people from all areas, and the
4 support was extremely strong, good questions, and just a few
5 days later we got another fire. We are going to have fires,
6 and I just want to get back to the funding because we all
7 know that is what's keeping us from getting anywhere. I
8 have asked a lot of people, would you pay a tax for fire;
9 and everybody I talked to says, "Yes, I would pay a tax for
10 fire." So I think we need not to be afraid to ask for a
11 fire sales tax or property tax or what it is, I'm not wise
12 enough to know; but it's there and I think the people will
13 support it whatever we do because they are tired of losing
14 their houses to fire. So I just encourage you to get on
15 with it and we may have to come and speak to the Board of
16 Supervisors. Let's get it together. Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Thank you Barbara. Thank
18 you for your support for our staff and the appreciation for
19 their hard work. If speakers could hold the microphone a
20 little closer, that would be great. Dennis Sherman followed
21 by Tom Gardner.

22 CHIEF DENNIS SHERMAN: Good morning. I'm Dennis
23 Sherman and Chief of a volunteer fire department, probably
24 one of the smallest departments in the whole county. We
25 have been working on a project that actually was developed

1 for the County Enhancement Program. We looked at it very
2 carefully. And what it deals with, we're dealing with a
3 whole bunch of departments. We start way out there by
4 Borrego Springs. We work through Ocotillo, Shelter Valley,
5 Sunshine Summit, Montezuma Valley, and Julian area. Then we
6 go north to San Pasqual, Palomar Mountain, and Inner
7 Mountain, and then we work south down through Cuyamaca and
8 Mount Laguna down to the I-8 Corridor. Then we pick up
9 Campo and Boulevard. There's a lot of departments out there
10 that are unfunded or under funded and we would like to
11 provide better service to our citizens. So we've come up
12 with a program of, actually it was four of the enhancement
13 program; but what we would like to do is ask LAFCO that
14 LAFCO add this to their recommendations to the county. This
15 Fire Enhancement Program is for unfunded agencies in Zone 8
16 and their surrounding departments. There are some of the
17 departments who have picked up Schedule A contracts and
18 stuff like that and they're not in this need; but all those
19 departments, if you think about it, all of that area that
20 are on the map are serviced by volunteer departments without
21 the funding and without staffing. And this program is
22 designed to provide staffing for all of those departments;
23 all of them. What this program will provide is three new
24 staffing, seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day, to
25 thirteen different departments. One of the beauties of this

1 department of this whole program is that because we don't
2 have permanent employees, it can be expanded or it can be
3 reduced, it can be made to be what we need it to be. And
4 right now, what we need it to be is to provide staffing for
5 all of those departments. To do this, if you look up there,
6 it says limited station improvements; yep, there's going to
7 be some limited station improvements because we have to be
8 sure going into this that the guys have a place to take a
9 shower, that the guys have a place to cook their meals, and
10 a place to sleep. We have to be able to provide this. So
11 yeah, what we've budgeted is \$125,000 to start the program
12 and then we're going to get going from there on an on-going
13 basis. Now, employee cost will be substantially less than
14 what's in this SSP or the LAFCO plan. I know this because
15 little Mount Laguna, who lives on a budget of approximately
16 \$40,000 a year - the whole department - that whole
17 department lives on a budget of about \$40,000 a year, were
18 able to provide for our community staffing seven days a
19 week, twenty-four hours a day; and I think that's pretty
20 commendable. This program has been adopted and picked up by
21 a number of departments in the Zone 8 area, and it's
22 working. And so how do we know that this program can work?
23 We know it can work because we're doing it now, and what we
24 need is help to expand the program. Now what we're going to
25 offer is training and stipends to attract personnel. You

1 say, "Well, that won't attract many personnel." But in
2 reality, it does because there are many young men and women
3 that want to be in fire service. Fire service is a great,
4 great job. There's no better job out there. And so we
5 offer them to train, the experience, and with this program
6 we can offer them a stipend. The stipend will help them to
7 defray the cost of...they don't have to go flip hamburgers;
8 they can come and come and be part of this fire service. We
9 need them and they need us. There's a homerun there with
10 the county too because if we could put this program
11 together, and we're going to have roughly a hundred and
12 fifty of these reserves and volunteers into a pool, and this
13 pool would be used to staff all the stations, the county -
14 when it moves to Phase I - will be able to go through that
15 and when they need trained good personnel, when they need
16 that, they've got a pool to look at. We will be in a
17 position to select the cream of the crop, the best of the
18 best, to serve our county. And that's what we need to be
19 able to do. The firefighters, it's a good thing for them,
20 it's a good thing for the county; but because this plan was
21 designed through the enhancement program, and we're not sure
22 when Phase I would really happen, we're looking also into
23 the possibility of a JPA or CSA to pull all these
24 departments together as a unit so that we're one. Very
25 quickly, if you look down at Level 4, the volunteer

1 firefighter group and qualified first responder, their 24
2 hour shift could receive only \$75 a day. Look up to Level
3 3, you add EMT or firefighter one or Class B drivers
4 license, that goes up to \$90. Level 2, any two things, may
5 be the guys from EMT that has a Class B license, that would
6 go up to \$105. And Level 1 is somebody who can do all of
7 that; somebody who's a firefighter one, EMT, and also has a
8 Class B license. Moving now, this is probably the part that
9 you're most interested in, if you look up at the top it says
10 employee stipend; it says \$1.5 million dollars, but because
11 of the sliding stipend scale that could be as low as \$1.1 or
12 as high as \$1.7. Employee overhead, right below it,
13 \$450,000 dollars and we paid them about thirty percent for
14 social security and workers comp and all those other things,
15 and that also would be a variable. To have the duty chief
16 to have to oversee the program during the day, and a
17 training officer to put together the academies that will be
18 necessary - the duty chief would get a stipend of only \$150
19 cause it's just to make sure everything is going smooth,
20 that would be sufficient; and a training officer to organize
21 the academies and such, probably would pay them \$1,000 a
22 month as a stipend. Station upgrades, we looked at \$125,000
23 and we already discussed that, and right above that we have
24 PPEs (Personnel Protective Equipment) at \$375,000 that would
25 equip about 150 people - that would be first year expense;

1 after that it would probably be in the \$50,000 range.
2 County contracts, right now we have a contract with the
3 county and we receive about \$23,000 on an average and what
4 we'd like to do is increase that from \$23,000 up to \$35,000.
5 And the reason is because if you have the station sitting
6 empty and nothings happening, that's okay; but as soon as
7 you put three people there, seven days a week, twenty-four
8 hours a day, utilities, propane, telephone, all those
9 expenses go up. So we need help in that department. And
10 then the academy expenses, again, is \$13,000; but that's
11 first year expenses, and after that \$6,500 a year. So
12 basically we've put it all into a pile, and what we've done
13 for \$3 million dollars, all of those stations that we've
14 talked about - all of them - could have staffing, seven days
15 a week, twenty-four hours a day for the benefit for the
16 people who are out there whether they be visitors or
17 residents. So I ask you to really consider that this plan
18 be added to LAFCO's recommendation to Phase I. I think that
19 we should do this because it's good for the county, it's
20 good for the departments who have been serving for a long,
21 long time out there; but most importantly, it's good for the
22 citizens of this county.

23 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Thank you Chief Sherman.
24 Thank you for all of your hard work. We have some
25 commissioners who have questions for you, starting with

1 Commissioner Jacob.

2 COMMISSIONER JACOB: Thank you Mr. Chairman, and
3 thank you Chief for coming down and the work that you've put
4 into this proposal. I just wanted to clarify, so what
5 you're asking us today is to move the LAFCO recommendation
6 forward to the Board of Supervisors, but to move the Zone 8
7 proposal forward with it? Is that correct?

8 CHIEF DENNIS SHERMAN: That's correct. Also, if
9 we could encourage the present enhancement program monies to
10 be involved in this program, then we could get ready for the
11 operation.

12 COMMISSIONER JACOB: Let's take it one at a
13 time...so the answer is yes.

14 CHIEF DENNIS SHERMAN: Yes.

15 COMMISSIONER JACOB: And was the decision by all
16 of the Zone 8 departments or the people who were involved
17 with this proposal unanimous, that you listed earlier?

18 CHIEF DENNIS SHERMAN: Yes, and everybody is in
19 favor of going forward with this program. Again, we have to
20 have the funding. Without the funding it's not going to
21 work.

22 COMMISSIONER JACOB: Understood, thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Commissioner Rexford.

24 COMMISSIONER REXFORD: How many are in your Zone?

25 CHIEF DENNIS SHERMAN: Actually, all of these

1 departments aren't in Zone 8. Some of them are in Zone 7.
2 I know that Palomar Mountain isn't officially in Zone 8. I
3 know that Boulevard and Campo aren't officially in Zone 8,
4 nor is De Luz. But all of these departments, are
5 departments that don't have funding, that needs staffing who
6 are sitting empty right now - the stations empty - we need
7 to have somebody on board at all times.

8 COMMISSIONER JACOB: So you're asking us about the
9 enhancement program and the county money. I don't know if
10 we looked at this, what the gentleman came up with today. We
11 might want to do that. My other question is to staff, is
12 did you look at that enhancement program when we were
13 looking at the programs?

14 EXECUTIVE OFFICER OTT: We were looking at the
15 fire enhancement program, not in terms of how monies are
16 allocated; but the dollar value of that program for the
17 region. I think Mr. Sherman's comments really pertain to
18 how decisions could be made by the board, Board of
19 Supervisors, on allocation of those fire enhancement monies.
20 That is something that we have not gotten into, and it
21 certainly is something that we could transmit to the board
22 if the Commission moves this proposal from LAFCO to the
23 board. It wouldn't be our position to actually dictate how
24 those funds should be allocated, though.

25 COMMISSIONER REXFORD: My other question follow-

1 up, it seems that they need money now because they don't
2 have a lot of the monies that they're bringing in. Is
3 enhancement money or the money from the county that they're
4 looking for?

5 COMMISSIONER HORN: This shouldn't be part of this
6 debate, but the county currently spends \$8 million dollars
7 with the Amador contracts and giving monies to the volunteer
8 departments, those who are involved with us in the outlying
9 areas. So that's all part of that \$8 million bucks that we
10 currently do. Ralph Steinhoff and county staff work with
11 them. It's not part of this debate, but they have
12 considered this amount of money in the LAFCO proposal. I
13 know how they would shift the money around, but that \$8
14 million dollars is included in here and what we're currently
15 providing them. We have given the volunteers equipment,
16 type 2 engines and water tankers to volunteers.

17 COMMISSIONER REXFORD: Okay. Well it seems like
18 he's got a point here.

19 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: An answer to your questions
20 is that I don't think that staff has had time to analyze
21 this; but most likely, it's the first time we've seen it.
22 It certainly has validity and I think that including it is
23 an enhancement to what we're currently looking at. I think
24 the key for us is to deal with our proposal that's before us
25 today and move it forward. Commissioner Pocklington.

1 COMMISSIONER POCKLINGTON: Thank you Mr. Chairman.
2 Many of my questions have already been answered. I guess
3 basically, we haven't really analyzed it. This is the first
4 time we've seen this, and the \$3 or \$2.5 million dollars
5 that you've included, is that already included in the \$8
6 million dollars?

7 CHIEF DENNIS SHERMAN: That \$3 million dollars, a
8 lot of that money is already being paid.

9 COMMISSIONER POCKLINGTON: So many of the things
10 you've talked about they're already getting paid?

11 CHIEF DENNIS SHERMAN: Yes. And so, actually
12 there wouldn't be an additional \$3 million dollars out of
13 pocket, it would be for instance on...

14 COMMISSIONER POCKLINGTON: You don't have to go
15 into detail. Chief, my other question is that we've been
16 working on this thing for two years that I know of. Why at
17 the last minute is this coming up all of a sudden?

18 CHIEF DENNIS SHERMAN: Because a while back
19 actually we did propose this at this same place, same
20 method; and I don't know what happened to it. We never
21 heard anything back on that.

22 COMMISSIONER POCKLINGTON: Okay thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Are there any other
24 questions? Commissioner Menshek.

25 COMMISSIONER MENSHEK: Just for a quick comment. I

1 agree with the chair, this is not the issue at hand today.
2 The SSPs were due in two years ago, although it seems like a
3 good plan. And also, I don't think LAFCO has any purview
4 over this plans; arguing over the money that the county
5 provides us. I suggest that the zoning chiefs deal directly
6 with the Board of Supervisors.

7 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Any other questions for
8 Chief Sherman? Chief, thank you very much. Tom Gardner
9 followed by Darrell Jobes.

10 CHIEF TOM GARDNER: Good morning, my name is Tom
11 Gardner...12065-213 Calle de Montana in Rancho San Diego. I am
12 here in opposition to Phase I. I sit on the Task Force for
13 Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services committee.
14 For several years, I have been involved in Sacramento and in
15 this county for a long time on fire protection. I am
16 standing here representing CDF firefighters, and our concern
17 is that members who sit on this task force, we had a meeting
18 scheduled this Friday and it was cancelled; then in the
19 following week, Item 9 came out and mailed. There's a lot
20 of issues on this item that should have been discussed at
21 the task force, mostly labor issues. Speaking for my
22 association and my members I represent, there's a lot in the
23 draft terms and conditions, there's a lot of assumptions
24 about MOUs and the right to transfer contracts. Speaking for
25 any employee, they're not going to transfer contracts until

1 they know who that agency is going to be. And again, what
2 that long term funding is going to be. It's an agency that
3 should have been considered before this report, was put in
4 or leave that part out of the report. It has a hole in it
5 and it's going to be a major concern. The employees have a
6 right to know where their funding is going to be. And
7 before your employees would find out this organization is
8 CSA 135, ask before you can effectively go out and recruit
9 employees, you're going to have to have a funding source in
10 place. And without that funding source, you're not going to
11 be able to attract the quality employees. Again on the
12 volunteer's proposal, on Zone 8 proposal and also on the
13 Fire Chiefs' proposal, I'll tell you an experience from the
14 state level if you bring recruits in and you use them as
15 three CFs, you become a training ground from the
16 departments. That's very good that you get that firefighter
17 for a year or two and you train them and spend thousands of
18 dollars on giving him all the classes and skills and
19 certificates he needs. He then leaves you and goes to work
20 for the City of San Diego, the County of Orange, the County
21 of Riverside, the County of San Bernardino, or La Mesa City
22 or El Cajon City. You do have a concern that you become a
23 training ground and you get very little return on all your
24 dollars. You also use volunteers over a thousand hours, and
25 if you're using that employee as a regular employee

1 scheduled for 24 hours so many days a week, you're going to
2 actually become an employee and he's going to have the right
3 for benefits. So a lot of these questions are unanswered in
4 this proposal that are in your recommendation in the report,
5 and although I agree with the fact that it needs to go to
6 the Board of Supervisors, the part about the labor issue is
7 unanswered and should have possibly been left out. Last,
8 the concern about the \$8.5 million and the county's funding
9 - and it is contracts that they do have with Cal-Fire and
10 CDF firefighters - this money would take the \$8.5 million
11 and use that in this new proposed 135; however, some of that
12 money is funding our people in Valley Center, Deer Springs,
13 it's funding paid staff in Pine Valley, it's funding paid
14 staff in the San Diego Rural District. What happens to
15 them? What happens to the funding if you take that money
16 away? Where do those employees go to? Is the county going
17 to come up with another \$2 million dollars to continue the
18 contracts in the north county, and in Pine Valley, and in
19 the San Diego Rural, with those employees and that district
20 chooses to stay with the state. And you take the other 8.5
21 million you have now got another budget funding problem. I
22 just believe that this... all though I agree it does have to
23 move forward I think that the recommendations are a little
24 broad and cover a little bit more then they possible should
25 be. Questions?

1 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Thank you. Are there any
2 questions for Mr. Gardner? No. Thank you very much.
3 Darrell Jobes.

4 CHIEF DARRELL JOBES: Thank you Mr. Chair, members
5 of the Commission, and staff. I had a chance to work with
6 LAFCO, both from special districts advisory on this project,
7 and the quality of work again I cannot emphasize how
8 dedicated and thorough the process has been. I've been with
9 the fire service thirty-two years, and twenty-three of those
10 years we've talked about consolidation, regionalization,
11 ways to improve services to the citizens. This is the
12 closest we've come. As we developed the SSP, the
13 Substantial Similar Plan, that included all of the stake-
14 holders in this county. It included cities, districts,
15 volunteer agencies, DPLU, LAFCO, CDF; everyone had a voice
16 in that discussion. As you know and it's been said before,
17 discussions are never unanimous; but we went with what the
18 majority felt was doable. Right now the cities and
19 districts are the ones to respond to the unserved,
20 underserved areas. We know the fire started in the east end
21 of this county, or the northeast end, and they move
22 westward. We need to have some type of a regionalized fire
23 approach not only for those every three or four year fires
24 now, and dozens of fires smaller that occur each year, but
25 more importantly to the EMS and the medical aids, the

1 traffic accidents that take place. This county is a tourist
2 Mecca. We have people coming and availing themselves of
3 tourist attractions throughout the county in the
4 incorporated municipal cities, but also in the rural
5 counties. That has a significant financial impact. You
6 look at your TOT taxes, the revenues from tourism, there's a
7 big source of revenue from this county, both cities and the
8 county itself. As we move through this, we ask - Darrell
9 Jobes, 1364 Tavern Road, Alpine CA, and I am President of
10 the San Diego County Fire Districts' Association, so I'll
11 back up a second - we ask that you send this
12 resolution/recommendation to the Board of Supervisors for
13 action. The Board of Supervisors has continually over the
14 years said that public safety is their number one concern.
15 Then let's give them some opportunity to address that with
16 the proposal. We want to keep a 30,000 foot look at this.
17 We don't want to get into the details here at LAFCO, about
18 how it could be done and so on. Once we identify the
19 funding, then we could determine the Board of Supervisors -
20 as the governing behind the CSA - will have the ability to
21 determine the service levels. We have to remember it needs
22 to be a regional approach. We're not just talking about one
23 portion of this county. We're in this all together. If you
24 look at San Diego county, we're isolated. We have Camp
25 Pendleton to the north, the deserts to the east, Mexico to

1 the south, and the Pacific Ocean. We are a small island of
2 our own. We talked about assistance. Cal-Fire turns to
3 local government for assistance on major incidents. They
4 don't have the staffing to handle all of the large scale
5 incidents because there's multiple. If we look at this last
6 October, how many fires? I believe there was 21 different
7 incidents were taking place in southern California. The
8 resources for those incidents come from local government.
9 We need to better prepare for local level to be able to take
10 care of ourselves on the day-to-day business, but also
11 through those larger scale incidents that occur - now what
12 we thought was thirty-year or a hundred-year cycle - and are
13 becoming more common on four-year cycles. We have an
14 excellent system through mutual and automatic aid in this
15 county; but it is one way. Between the districts and
16 cities, it's reciprocal; but when we start going past those
17 eastern boundaries, past my district, past the others, it is
18 one way. In closing, I just want to ask that this
19 Commission to forward to the Board of Supervisors, the
20 recommendation of the SSP and it must have sustainable on-
21 going adequate funding. Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Thank you Chief Jobes. Are
23 there any questions for Chief Jobes?

24 COMMISSIONER JACOB: Just a quick one. Chief
25 Jobes, thanks for coming down and I know you've been

1 involved in this for a long time and some of us have also.
2 Since you're here today representing the Fire Districts'
3 Association, those fire districts are they in north county,
4 east county, south county, all over the county?

5 CHIEF DARRELL JOBES: There are sixteen well
6 organized fire protection districts, and there are numerous
7 volunteers. It's throughout the county. And our decision
8 and recommendations were not unanimous by far, but they were
9 an overwhelming of a majority of decisions to support the
10 SSP.

11 COMMISSIONER JACOB: Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Thank you Chief Jobes.
13 Commissioner Rexford.

14 COMMISSIONER REXFORD: So you're the county? You
15 don't represent the cities, just the county districts.

16 CHIEF DARRELL JOBES: Correct. We represent the
17 fire districts in the unincorporated county and those
18 volunteer agencies that wished to participate in our
19 organization.

20 COMMISSIONER REXFORD: Ok. Thanks.

21 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: I believe we have one other
22 speaker. Is there any one else, before we take this
23 speaker, that wants to address this issue?

24 JACK GRIFFITHS: (Addressed the Commission with
25 fire insurance issues).

1 COMMISSIONER HORN: Unfortunately, of all these
2 folks who live in Zone 7 and Zone 8 are not insurable.
3 Insurance companies will not insure their homes, just
4 because of the threat that's there. And what we have tried
5 to do is lower, on an insurance scale, by putting in
6 equipment and departments where they have...to lower that down
7 so their premiums go down. But many of the people we're
8 talking here about here can't get insurance.

9 CHAIMAN VANDERLAAN: Any comments or questions by
10 the commissioners? Commissioner Horn.

11 COMMISISONER HORN: I want to cover a number of
12 issues because I'm probably going to be the odd man out
13 here. I sat on this Commission and I agreed in the
14 beginning to look into this idea and see what it cost. The
15 conclusions at the end, I didn't think were worth it for
16 Phase I. It doesn't cover enough of the area. I think the
17 things that the county has done in the last couple of years,
18 to implement Amador contracts, have really supplanted a lot
19 of these. I would point out to those who have criticized a
20 lot of the outlying area, fire departments on the area, our
21 helicopters fly everywhere in the county of San Diego. We
22 don't delineate whether it's one city or not a city. Our
23 equipment is available, and if you need it, it will be
24 called out. So, as far as that goes, I think that's
25 important. The Amador contracts for us in north county and

1 provide us with EMS; I know because I was in a head-on car
2 collision and the first people to show up were the Cal-Fire
3 guys that just got through signing a contract about two
4 weeks earlier; and their EMS group came with them. One of
5 the reasons that Warner Springs Fire Station was closed, is
6 because we have an Amador Cal-Fire Station right there
7 that's open twelve months out of the year; and Sunshine
8 Summit Volunteer Department is right down the road. I would
9 say this to all the fire folks, you do a tremendous job. I
10 have been Supervisor for thirteen years, I have probably
11 seen twelve major fire in my district. I know that the
12 Cedar Fire gets a lot of publicity, but at the same time I
13 had the Paradise Fire, which burned as just as many homes
14 for us and we lost lives there. So any time you respond,
15 you're to be applauded; you are real heroes in my mind. I
16 think over the last few years, I would say the last ten, I
17 have tried to donate either to my departments, whether they
18 happen to be their own independent boards or whether they're
19 volunteer departments, I have provided equipment about \$1
20 million dollars a year. So from our office, we have
21 basically put about \$10 million bucks into this system in
22 the last ten years. As you know, the county has provided a
23 number of Type-2 engines and water tankers to help augment
24 the service. I have a newspaper article written in 1852,
25 out of San Francisco, that warned travelers not to go to

1 southern California because everything from the central
2 valley south was on fire. And that's a hundred and some odd
3 years ago, and it's always going to be that way. When I was
4 a young kid, going to Mission Bay High School, we had the
5 Laguna Fire. It burned all the way to the sand and the
6 ocean. You might remember that. Fire is just a way of life
7 for us. Unfortunately, the reason it comes every three or
8 four years is because we're stuck with some clearing
9 ordinances from the state and federal government that
10 doesn't allow us to take some of these watersheds and make
11 them non-burnable. And so in the three or four years when
12 it grows back, we have another Santa Ana and the fire sweeps
13 through. No matter how much equipment you put in front of
14 these fires, you're not going to stop them; not when they're
15 moving forty to sixty miles an hour. You think you may
16 channel the fire and get on the sides of it, but until that
17 wind stops you're not going to put any equipment in front of
18 it; if you do, it's going to burn. Unfortunately, no matter
19 how much of that we put in there, there's always going to be
20 danger to structures; and they're going to sweep into the
21 cities. I noticed in this phase here that the cities had an
22 opportunity, as did the other departments that were in the
23 cities, to opt out. They all opted out except mostly east
24 county fire departments. I realize they have a deficiency
25 in EMS service, but that issue is what's being addressed

1 here. I don't think the overall fire effectiveness of
2 fighting these fires is going to be augmented. In fact, I
3 think the north county is going to be diminished; because
4 I'm afraid I'm going to see the Amador stations closed in a
5 number of areas, which is you're going to put me one station
6 in Warner Springs and three others are going to go down. So
7 I would prefer to have the augmented fire departments. I
8 don't believe that my colleagues, and I can't speak for the
9 board, is going to go along with this. I think what we have
10 provided already, and we do need to spend more money...but if
11 I'm going to spend more money on fire, I would like some
12 more equipment. I would like and air tanker that belong to
13 us, maybe a couple more helicopters that belong to us. In
14 the 2003 fires we had a problem we had a problem with
15 command and control, we had a problem with communications.
16 The county spent \$25 million dollars since then to augment
17 the communication system. We didn't have a problem this
18 time, that I'm aware of. Our Office of Emergency Services
19 have been totally upgraded. Unfortunately, the fires were
20 in such a high-wind situation, smoked stayed on the ground
21 and our satellite imaging didn't work; but our helicopters
22 had infrared so it could tell us where the fire was going.
23 I think there's a lot of stuff we need to be more effective,
24 but we're always going to have fires. If we could solve the
25 problem, we would; but we're always going to have fires. I

1 just don't think this is the solution. I think it's too
2 expensive, and I think the amount of money needed to really
3 do this right is close to \$100 million, maybe more, a year
4 to make that happen. So to spend \$25 million a year on a
5 hope, and we don't really know where the monies are coming
6 from. And that two-year Bill that Mr. Hollingsworth has,
7 that's not going to get out of the closet; I mean that's
8 just my opinion. So I'm going to vote against this, and I
9 just want to make that up front. I think what we have works
10 well. I would like more equipment. If I had more
11 helicopters, I would maybe allow some of them to go out of
12 the county on mutual aid; but at the moment they're
13 restrictive to stay in county cause we don't have that much.

14 But I want to thank you for your service, and I want to
15 thank especially the volunteer departments and all of the
16 independent departments out there. You did a hell of a job
17 with very little, and we need to augment more of that; but
18 at the same time I don't think creating a huge bureaucracy
19 is a way to go.

20 CHIARMAN VANDERLAAN: Thank you. Any other
21 commissioners? Commissioner Rexford.

22 COMMISSIONER REXFORD: Yes. We've been working on
23 this for a long time. A lot of the people in this community
24 are involved with the fires. You and some of the other
25 people are involved. We're the city appointees to this

1 committee here. And I have talked to my fire chief...I was
2 just out there trying to follow-up and see where the City of
3 Poway is on this. But this is basically for the county.
4 One thing I know that I am not going to support this time,
5 or if it comes to be investigated later, is that when they
6 said property tax on all San Diego county and cities; the
7 cities pay for their fire service right now, and they have
8 fire services. And it looks like something that is coming
9 up, but what I'm looking at today is to move this - if I'm
10 correct - to the Board of Supervisors to vote on this for
11 the money, and then to try to find the money which we don't
12 have the money right now. So that's all we're doing today,
13 am I correct Mr. Ott?

14 EXECUTIVE OFFICER OTT: Correct.

15 COMMISSIONER REXFORD: Okay. We're not improving
16 any taxes on all the cities and all the counties. That
17 would have to go to a vote of all the people. I would like
18 to thank the firefighters. Poway was really in a fire storm
19 up there, we lost 90 homes and I appreciate all the people
20 being there and what was happening to Poway but
21 unfortunately the winds were clocked at 80 mile an hour. We
22 know we have Santa Anas, the winds are going to blow, and I
23 don't think you could stop that right in these winds that
24 were blowing. It's like Bill Horn said, it's a fact of
25 life. It comes here and you don't want personnel in the way

1 of 80-mile an hour winds. We couldn't get up the high
2 valley because it was bad, so we all did the best we could,
3 and the counties and the cities and CAL-Fire and everything;
4 and I would like to applaud them. This isn't over because
5 it's going to happen again. We live in the desert here, and
6 it's very dry. What we're trying to resolve here today is
7 to try and find some money. This is the way I look at it,
8 and I don't think Hollingsworth's thing is going to get out
9 of communities either. We're trying to find, maybe...well
10 since we had this big fire...but we're trying to find a way to
11 start negotiations to see if the county, and if this can get
12 through to get money to them. I kind of resent a little bit
13 that everybody all of a sudden (in audible)...and say, "Oh,
14 well look what happened, we had these big fires." We had
15 them in 2003, we had them then. I don't want to do a scare
16 tactic, because for years we've always needed more help in
17 the fire areas in the county particularly. And so this
18 isn't a new problem just because of the fires have happened,
19 this problem has been around since I can remember. So it's
20 not a new problem, it's a way to find funding to fund this;
21 and I'll support it to go up to the next level, but I want
22 to be very, very adamant here that I'm not supporting taxes
23 for cities and things like that. I mean if there's problems
24 with different areas and things, I don't want to go there.
25 What I want to do is do my job on LAFCO and go through all

1 this information that I've received. So, we need to find a
2 way to get the support, and this is going to go to the
3 county...am I correct on that, before we go out to the
4 funding, somebody tell me this all moves into the county and
5 the county votes on it?

6 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: This will go to the Board of
7 Supervisors. We're keeping the dialog alive by moving it
8 forward. Issues that have been discussed here, how to fund
9 it, will all come in play as it moves forward. The other
10 issues related to levels of service, like once again, I
11 would just recommend to our Commission focus on the fact
12 that we're talking about day-to-day operations.
13 Catastrophic events are going to occur. We've seen several
14 of those unfortunately in the last few years, but this is a
15 day-to-day operation we're paying to make our county more
16 whole than it is right now. And the funding pieces,
17 whatever that rolls out to be - Hollingsworth, special tax,
18 sales tax, what have you, money from the sky - will all come
19 forward and be brought to light. And a forum that is more
20 related to dealing with those issues than we are as a
21 commission. So what we have before us is our staff report
22 and recommendation. We've heard the dialog from the fire
23 folks that are here, including another proposal or issue
24 across the board. It relates to what's going to happen with
25 the current money the county is providing. But I think we

1 need to move this forward so that we can see it get other
2 dialog by those that have stronger powers.

3 COMMISSIONER REXFORD: Okay. Well thank you for
4 that. So if it fails in the county and the county doesn't
5 have the money, then what happens. We don't move to go to
6 the state for money. So instead if the county does not
7 support this.

8 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: In any event, it would come
9 back to us for either results that would happen with the
10 county or for ratification or condition.

11 COMMISSIONER REXFORD: My other question is, and I
12 think Dianne brought it up and I'm very concerned and I want
13 to make sure that nothing happens to the outland areas, that
14 they do not lose manpower and they do not lose anything like
15 that?

16 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: That's correct. That's what
17 the baseline tenants have requested.

18 COMMISSIONER REXFORD: Everything stays the same?

19 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Correct.

20 COMMISSIONER REXFORD: The other thing is we might
21 want to look back in court, about what the gentleman said in
22 all those counties and all those places out there like
23 Julian and those that he was looking for some kind of
24 enhancement. I don't know if we'd looked at that, but you
25 know if this is going to come back and forth, I think this

1 is something you might want to look at. So I believe that's
2 my take on it and I will support it going forward, but I
3 have some concerns about taxing people and things.

4 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Commissioner Menshek.

5 COMMISSIONER MENSHEK: Thank you very much Mr.
6 Chair. In my opinion, I think LAFCO's mission on this issue
7 is about 99% complete today. We've done all the work.
8 We've put an excellent proposal together, and now that last
9 piece of 1% is a part that needs to go to the Board of
10 Supervisors. And I urge you to move that today and allow
11 that decision to be made. At that point then, if it's made
12 by the Board of Supervisors one way or another, then it
13 simply comes back for ratification at that point. Having
14 said that, I heard a lot of testimony and a lot of my fellow
15 commissioners made comments, but what we need to remember
16 also is Prop C. Prop C was overwhelming, never unanimous
17 just like this commission is never unanimous, but it's the
18 majority and that's the way our government and country and
19 county works. Prop C and all the Fire Districts' Association
20 - in support, Fire Chiefs' Association - in support, this
21 Commission - in support. The overwhelming support for Prop
22 C is something that we need to listen to. Fires are a fact
23 of life here, but what's unacceptable to me is the 20
24 fatalities. These are not once occurring fires, they're
25 occurring on a regular basis. And I said this many times,

1 something changed in the year 2000; the Viejas Fire, 01
2 Gavlin Fire, 02 Pines Fire, 03 Cedar Fire, 04, and it just
3 keeps going and going and getting bigger and bigger. We do
4 need a single source role of administration for our fire
5 program in the back country. Not just for the big fires; the
6 chiefs hit it right on the money today, it's the day-to-day
7 operations. It's the medical, it's the training, it's the
8 EMS delivery service out there; but we're the only large
9 county in the state that doesn't have an organized fire
10 protection entity in the back country, in our unincorporated
11 areas. In fact we have millions of acres that are in no
12 jurisdiction what so ever. That needs to be looked at. All
13 the other models of fire service delivery are using a single
14 source agency to administer their fire protection
15 agreements, administer their fire programs. And yet we're
16 having large, disastrous, fatal fires. It's a wake up call
17 for us, it's a wake up call for us and we're just not
18 getting it. I was looking at a document here by the Board
19 of Supervisors and it says codifying December 1988, the Fire
20 Emergency Services of San Diego County prepared by George
21 Bailey supervisor second district, "the county needs to
22 identify within its own organizational structure, needs to
23 take into consideration the public safety services provided
24 by fire agencies. Subregional consolidations and functional
25 consolidations have great potential for creating more cost

1 effective service delivery through fire agencies.
2 Distribution equipment, facilities, and personnel can be
3 enhanced. It starts with augmentation funds and provides
4 the most compelling incentive." And that's what we're
5 trying to do today. The Zone 8 program has some validity to
6 it. They need some incentives. The consolidations that are
7 sitting there right now, there are agencies that want to
8 consolidate outside of Phase I; but there's no incentive.
9 I'm employed as a battalion chief by a consolidated agency.
10 In 1988, Spring Valley and Mount Helix consolidated; there
11 was an incentive provided by the county and we didn't need
12 to come up with outside funds. They said we'll need a
13 little piece of the growth of property tax, and it was
14 extremely successful and it continues to be successful
15 today. At one point we had sixty plus fire agencies in this
16 county; imagine the command and control structure in trying
17 to coordinate that when we have these type of incidents.
18 So, we're the only county out there that's doing it oddly,
19 we're the only one out there in the top five now I believe
20 in devastating fires and fatalities. It's unacceptable to
21 me as a citizen, unacceptable to me as an elected official,
22 and it's certainly unacceptable to me as a battalion chief
23 and a career fire professional in this county. And I find
24 it abysmal that we cannot move forward after 20 to 30 years
25 of work, we bring a program together and cannot find

1 funding. It's embarrassing to me, and so at this point we
2 need to move this forward to the Board of Supervisors and
3 allow them to make a decision on this. And if the Board of
4 Supervisors has a certain amount that they can put in -
5 fantastic, we appreciate that. Next point being is at some
6 point our citizens also have to have some responsibility and
7 input in this. We as a fire agency, we as a fire
8 profession, ask our citizens in the County of San Diego to
9 be on their own; be self prepared and self sufficient for 72
10 hours. And it's a hypocrisy because we as a fire service
11 can't even sustain on our own for 72 hours; we kept
12 harassing our citizens to do this. One of the speakers said
13 before we're a geographical island for mutual and automatic
14 aid. We're the last bit of food chain in 58 counties. In
15 fact we should have double the resources of any other county
16 because of that simple geographic isolation out there, our
17 resources are siphoned off. And the county can't do it all
18 alone, the cities can't do it all alone, and the special
19 districts can't do it all alone. So at some point the county
20 needs to make a decision on this, and at that point whatever
21 they're willing to put in that's the baseline amount, then
22 we need to go to the public - next topic, do you or do you
23 not want to pay for fire protection. And that could be
24 property tax, it could be sales tax. I don't know, it could
25 be in the form of a Prop 172 money, the enhancement that was

1 done in 93; sore point to all firefighters granted.
2 However, if there was dedicated revenue to fire service that
3 was equitably divided among the voting entity, such as a
4 quarter cents sales tax; half of that go to the cities, one
5 half of that - half going to the consolidation the other
6 half going to the existing fire district - has to be
7 equitably distributed. However, two things need to occur,
8 this needs to move to the Supervisors for finality on this
9 particular phase and we really need the Board of Supervisors
10 involved to do this - call for the election. Let's let the
11 people vote and decide the local service that they want for
12 our county today. Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Commissioner Jacob.

14 COMMISSIONER JACOB: Thank you Mr. Chairman. I
15 would consider this to be a landmark decision by this
16 commission like none other that we have been faced with
17 before. If we don't move forward today with this, then the
18 efforts of the last four years - not to speak of the last
19 twenty years - will have been forgotten. And there's a
20 reason that this has not happened at this time, it hasn't
21 happened sooner. If it was easy, it would have been done;
22 but we all know how difficult this has been. We are in a
23 cross-road and I think it is important to move forward. Let
24 me just make a couple of comments on some of the things that
25 have transpired. First a big thank you to all of the fire

1 personnel, all the men and women in the firefighting service
2 and emergency services and law enforcement. What an
3 incredible job once again that you did in your response to
4 this most recent fire. And there's always the silver lining
5 and who would ever have guessed that four years after the
6 Cedar Fire that we would be faced with another major fire.
7 I think we all considered the Cedar Fire a thirty-year
8 event. Well, here we are once again, and it will happen
9 again. What I think the Fire Storm 2007 has done for us, it
10 has given us another big kick to move forward to do
11 something that we have never done before in this region.
12 And as Andy said that we are the only large county in the
13 State of California that does not have some kind of a
14 countywide fire entity, and that is our goal is to do just
15 that. This is but the first step. The county initiated a
16 program right after the Cedar Fire, and in fact we have
17 invested over \$120 million dollars of county money into
18 improving notification, evacuation procedures, the
19 resources, twenty-nine fire engines, fire equipment at one
20 time or another, vegetation management, and there's a whole
21 list of things. And that was done because we wanted, as a
22 Board of Supervisors, to get out the door with some money as
23 soon as we could to make things better and to improve the
24 service; but it's not enough, there is more work to be done.
25 And yes there's been comment, several of you commented on

1 the Hollingsworth bill which is on hold, and the reason it
2 was on hold is because the consultant did want to see more
3 specifically what our plan for consolidation looked like.
4 We have all known that that is an uphill battle and it's a
5 long shot, but it's a fairness issue too because fact is
6 State of California has been using at least \$300 million
7 dollars of our property tax money every single year and it's
8 not fair. What that bill has done though, in my personal
9 conversations with our delegation in Sacramento, is it's
10 opened a dialog, it's opened the process and we've gotten a
11 lot of interest from our delegation on both sides of the
12 aisle. And they've learned a lot as to what our issues are
13 here in this region in terms of fire and emergency medial
14 services. So whether this bill is successful or not, the
15 State has a role, the State has a responsibility to partner
16 with the county and maybe the voters - who knows - in coming
17 up with some kind of a solution, a regionalized solution to
18 solve our fire and emergency medical preparedness. We're
19 not the best that we could be. And it's my goal, and I hope
20 it's our goal, to make us the best prepared we can possibly
21 be in this region. So the dialog began with that
22 legislation, and the dialog has not stopped yet; and I
23 intend to keep that going. And I hope I have some help on
24 that too. We have a lot of support for the LAFCO
25 recommendation here. In fact there has only been one

1 speaker in opposition; and if there were others who were
2 opposed to this, this is the opportunity to come before the
3 board and to speak. We have heard from the Fire Chiefs'
4 Association that they are supportive of us moving forward.
5 We have heard from the Fire Districts' Association. We have
6 heard a Zone 8 proposal and a recommendation and support
7 from all of those fire agencies within Zone 8 and three
8 outside of Zone 8 urging us to move forward. And we also
9 have the San Diego County Tax Payers' Association here,
10 which has also been supportive and Lani Lutar is here and I
11 think she got her slip in a little late or she probably
12 would have spoken too. This is a regional issue, and I
13 think the Cedar Fire and this most recent fire storm did for
14 all San Diegans - who were incredible by the way - is it did
15 underscore dramatically, that fire and emergency medical
16 services is a regional issue. What happens in east county,
17 and that's where most of the fires are starting, east and
18 north county, and they come into the cities; it affects
19 everybody in the regions, but not to be forgotten, that
20 about 90%-95% of the calls are emergency medical services.
21 And when a person drives from the coast out to Julian, out
22 to Campo, up to San Pasqual Valley, or vice versa, you
23 expect for emergency medical personnel to be there to
24 respond and to know that in most of these areas they're
25 volunteers out there and you better hope that they're home

1 that day you have that accident or there's not going to be a
2 response. We need to do better and we can do better. But
3 it is a regional issue and every single San Diegan in this
4 region has an issue in this whether it's fire or emergency
5 medical. It's the day-to-day activities of response that's
6 important. What's this really going to do? The bottom line
7 is ultimate plan - 1 chief instead of 13 chiefs, 1 board
8 instead of 13 boards, centralize command and control of
9 resources, better coordination of training, communications,
10 vegetation management, inspections, all of the functions of
11 the fire service, the deployment of resources, stations will
12 be staffed 24/7 able to respond to major fires and daily
13 emergency calls. It reduces bureaucracy, it does not add,
14 it creates greater efficiency, greater coordination and
15 significantly reduces bureaucracy. So I am prepared at this
16 time to put a motion on the floor to approve the LAFCO
17 recommendation and to move forward to the Board of
18 Supervisors a summary of the testimony that has been
19 provided here today, including the Zone 8 proposal that was
20 brought before us; and that would be my motion.

21 COMMISSIONER POCKLINGTON: Second. And I would
22 like to make comments Mr. Chairman.

23 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Yes. There's a motion to
24 second. Commissioner Pocklington.

25 COMMISSIONER POCKLINGTON: You know I was the

1 chairman of this Commission four year ago, and the fire
2 thing came up right near the end of my responsibility, and
3 Andy was elected to be the new chairman. I thought what a
4 great guy to have this job, because I didn't want it. It's
5 such a dramatic and big job. So we've been working on this
6 thing for three full years and it's finally coming to a
7 conclusion; and it's a money issue, there's no doubt about
8 it. So we do need to move it to the Board of Supervisors
9 and hopefully they'll be able to find a ways to provide that
10 money. And I want to thank Mr. Ott and his staff for all
11 the hard work that they've done, and for all of you out
12 there in the audience who have been working on this. You've
13 done a tremendous job and especially the firefighters. I
14 want to end up with a couple of stories, because it's all
15 dramatic from this last fire. I have a friend who lives in
16 north county and he was telling me about the fire and how
17 close it came to his house, in fact it was saved by a fire
18 crew. I said well what district was that or what city? He
19 said, "Bud, it was a small city sitting outside of
20 Sacramento, California that came down here and saved our
21 house." And we had so many of them that came from other
22 parts of the state, even from Arizona I think, and New
23 Mexico. So I mean it was super to have these people coming
24 in to help save our property and save lives. The other
25 thing happened is that we actually got an evacuation order

1 for our treatment plant down in Sweetwater Authority on the
2 Sweetwater Reservoir; and they were ordered to start moving
3 out, and about 10 o'clock that morning two Navy helicopters
4 came into Sweetwater. They spent the whole day there to put
5 the fire out that was coming down the hill from Mount
6 Miguel, and we didn't have to evacuate; we didn't have to
7 pack up and move out of the treatment plant. The other
8 thing is that I'm in the water business; I serve on about
9 four different water boards - San Diego County Water
10 Authority and also the Metropolitan Board District - and we
11 have a very deep concern about droughts. The last eight
12 years we've had seven years below average of water; and with
13 the ocean and climate changes, every indication is that we
14 are going to have droughts pave through here much quicker.
15 We're very concerned about us being able to provide the
16 water that we need. So these fires are not going to go away
17 - they're not going to go away. There was an interesting
18 article in the paper this week in the City of San Diego Fire
19 Chief and the need for more stations, more fire engines; so
20 this is not just one portion of the county, it's the whole
21 county that we need to take a look at. And I hope that the
22 Board of Supervisors...I'm glad I'm not in your shoes. You've
23 got to find a way to provide funding. And if you don't
24 we're going to be back here fighting the same problem again.

25 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Are there any others? Mr.

1 Horn has a clarification.

2 COMMISSIONER HORN: Yeah, sure. Commissioner
3 Menshek brought this up, and it's about the clearing. I
4 would like to point out that I think one of the root causes
5 of our fires is that we have allowed wicks to grow into our
6 cities. We have the MSCP, which allowed the Cedar Fire to
7 go from Ramona into the City of San Diego. Years ago when I
8 was at a Charger game, I headed north as fast as I could
9 because I had a Harmony Grove fire that burned into
10 Carlsbad. Why? Because we had put a wick right down
11 through the brand new homes. We just basically channeled
12 the fire and moved it in Poomacha - the Poomacha Fire, which
13 is Mount Palomar - because we were allowed by the federal
14 government to clear the forest and take the fuel away from
15 the town and away from the observatory. So those volunteer
16 departments and Cal-Fire were able to channel that fire and
17 move it to the north and keep it away from any structure or
18 the observatory. I think the real issues here for us, as
19 much as it is equipment, is we have to get the state and
20 federal governments to sit down with us - Fish and Game and
21 Fish and Wild Life - and allow us to clear, and I mean clear
22 remove fuel and I mean make it naked, I mean we've got to
23 clear fuel out of these wicks. San Pasqual was the wick for
24 Rancho Bernardo; my daughter's home is one of four that
25 stood, and thank God those guys fought that fire, but it was

1 extremely difficult for them. Not only did they have enough
2 equipment, but the massive movement in that fire in less
3 than three hours was unprecedented. So as long as we have
4 this fuel and we allow it because we want to have green
5 trees, and we want to have this growth between our homes.
6 Poway, you lost your homes in Poway. Why...because you had a
7 wick and allowed the fire to get in there. I really think,
8 and not picking on anyone, but we have got to sit down and
9 face reality the federal government...cause most of this
10 county is owned by the feds, and the next biggest part is
11 the State of California and then it comes to us and we have
12 to remove the fuel out of these wick. So when fire moves at
13 forty miles or sixty miles an hour down a canyon, and when
14 it gets to a three mile stretch where we have been allowed
15 to control burn - which we don't do any more - then we could
16 stop that fire long enough or slow it long enough to put it
17 out or keep it from going into town. So if we're not
18 allowed to remove fuel from these areas, we're going to
19 continue to have this. As pointed out, we have had this for
20 145 years of newspaper coverage of southern California, and
21 we're going to continue to have it until we get rid of fuel,
22 period.

23 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Before that, I don't think
24 that we get a lot of advocates here in this room for fuel
25 management. It would be nice to see the county take a lead

1 in that. Commissioner Rexford.

2 COMMISSIONER REXFORD: I'd like to follow-up on
3 that. The City of Poway has just in the last two-three
4 weeks did a new fire code of how the house can be built.
5 This month we're meeting with Fish and Wild Life and we're
6 going to the state and federal government. Our Mayor Mickey
7 Cafagna, he is running it back to SANDAG for the 18 cities
8 to work at removing the fuel and what how much you can do in
9 that because I do think that we've been hampered; but you
10 see what happens, the cities have to take a stand and I
11 believe they're going to be that stand as we speak and Poway
12 right now is taking the lead and going up and talk to Fish
13 and Wild Life and the representatives. So I think that is a
14 must. I think a lot of the county areas need to be to have
15 events of things if its 100, 200 acres, 300, what ever it is
16 to protect those homes. And the federal government has
17 sided with us, and we did the overlay. And when I looked at
18 the overlay at city council, half of Poway is in the high-
19 high fire area and of course their insurance is going to go
20 up and when they build homes it's going to go up; but it's
21 important that we, as a county and all the cities, work
22 together with the state and go right now and say we won't
23 take this any more. We won't have our homes burning just
24 because of your habitat planning, cause they lost the
25 animals too. But I also wanted to follow-up with this

1 gentleman here about the 172...(in audible)...

2 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Commissioner Hilliard.

3 COMMISSIONER HILLIARD: Del Mar as you know is the
4 smallest city and we are part of the county and it's part of
5 our concern as well, and we recognize that. In this last
6 fire, our fire truck was dispatched to Potrero. Our
7 emergency operation center was handling calls from Santee to
8 the east. It's a county problem, it's our problem, and we
9 stand with the rest of the county in addressing the problem.
10 There are many pieces to the puzzle. I agree with a little
11 bit with what Bill Horn said that perhaps it there would be
12 more effective ways to combat these fires, but once they get
13 rolling, once the get rolling you can't stop them. So the
14 key is to try and stop them before they get rolling.
15 Starting with what Supervisor Horn said about the wicks,
16 it's true. We have Crest Canyon, which is our wick. We
17 attempted to clear it, we cleared that part that was owned
18 by Del Mar. State of California refused to allow us to
19 clear that part that was owned by them, and the City of San
20 Diego said no we want to preserve the habitat on our side.
21 So we still have that problem, we have to jointly work
22 together. What is absolutely clear is we're on our own for
23 the first 24 to 48 hours. Federal emergency responders were
24 not prepared to respond to an emergency. The state can't
25 act with bureaucratic problems they have swiftly enough. We

1 have to be prepared to do our own thing and to do what we
2 can do to stop the fires before they get rolling. Who pays
3 for all that? We're paying now. We pay to send our fire
4 truck, we pay for smoke damage, we were evacuated...every
5 single one of us has family who had fire whip right down the
6 river valley and destroyed a lot of things in it's path;
7 creatures, brush, buildings. The issue is can we reduce
8 that bill, and can we do it in a way that stops and seize
9 fires in their tracks. And I thank we have Mr. Ott, and I'm
10 going to move the motion. Thanks.

11 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Thank you. Commissioner
12 Jacob.

13 COMMISSIONER JACOB: Just a couple of other great
14 comments. One of the things that Supervisor Horn and I do
15 agree on today is the vegetation management issue. The
16 vegetation management is so important and we learned that
17 because the Board of Supervisors back after the Viejas fire
18 in 2001, initiated action that formed a wild land task
19 force. And that included federal, state, local agencies, as
20 well as the wild life agencies. And they put together a
21 report, and basically the results of that report it stated
22 emphatically that the single most important thing that we
23 can do in this region to better manage another major fire is
24 vegetation management. And at the time they recommended
25 prescribed burns of 27,000 acres a year. Now I checked

1 recently and we're doing about 3,000 acres a year; so we're
2 not meeting the goal that was laid out. And in talking to
3 some of the Cal-Fire officials who are in charge of some of
4 these programs, it takes them up to a year to get through
5 all the bureaucratic red tape, all the environmental impact
6 reports that it takes to do a prescribed burn. Now that has
7 to stop, and that's where we need some changes in the law or
8 something. Maybe the county and cities can work together
9 along with fire agencies to get waivers of those laws so
10 that we can engage in a very aggressive vegetation
11 management plan. That is one piece of the puzzle. It's
12 like the mayor said, it's not the total solution, but it's a
13 very important piece that we can do and should do better;
14 but we need the cooperation of state and federal officials
15 in order to accomplish that goal, including changing some of
16 those laws to make sure that we can do these prescribed, as
17 they call control burns, quicker. The same with maintenance
18 of fire breaks and those kinds of things. Certainly a valid
19 point Supervisor, and I agree with you and I hope that we
20 can do some things that the county working with the cities
21 where we can engage in a more aggressive plan to do just
22 that.

23 COMMISSIONER HORN: You might remember the little
24 fire we had in Julian or Laguna, wherever it was, that
25 burned towards Montezuma Valley. I had duty that night and

1 I remember that the fire commander wanting to cut a fire
2 road across to save Montezuma Valley and the EPA refusing to
3 allow them to do it at 11:30 at night, and it burned all of
4 Montezuma Valley and all the homes and everything else
5 because of some idiot wouldn't allow the fire commander to
6 be in charge. So when it comes to public safety, I think if
7 these guys are in charge and the fire is active, they should
8 override the environmental issues - all those kinds of
9 issues - except for health and safety; but other than that,
10 I think some of these regulations are just idiotic. And
11 we're not going to solve it with this, but they need to be
12 addressed because like every one of these guys sitting out
13 here can tell you they've run up against that at some point.

14 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Are there any other comments,
15 questions? Well I'm longer in the tooth than a lot of the
16 fire folks here. I go back to the designs for disaster
17 relief that was made after the Malibu fire in the 60's which
18 burned all the way to the ocean. So here we are kicking
19 this can down the road, not just in our county, but I think
20 our county is designed for disaster and we've seen that. So
21 if there are no other comments or questions from our
22 questions from our staff, I think we would call for the
23 question that's acceptable. Roll call vote please.

24 COMMISSION SECRETARY MANDAPAT: Commissioner
25 Vanderlaan.

1 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Yes.
2 COMMISSION SECRETARY MANDAPAT: Commissioner Horn.
3 COMMISSIONER HORN: No.
4 COMMISSION SECRETARY MANDAPAT: Commissioner
5 Pocklington.
6 COMMISSIONER POCKLINGTON: Aye.
7 COMMISSIONER SECRETARY MANDAPAT: Commissioner
8 Jacob.
9 COMMISSIONER JACOB: Yes.
10 COMMISSION SECRETARY MANDAPAT: Commissioner
11 Hilliard.
12 COMMISSIONER HILLIARD: Yes.
13 COMMISSION SECRETARY MANDAPAT: Commissioner
14 Rexford.
15 COMMISSIONER REXFORD: Yes.
16 COMMISSION SECRETARY MANDAPAT: Commissioner
17 Menshek.
18 COMMISSIONER MENSHEK: Aye.
19 COMMISSION SECRETARY MANDAPAT: Commissioner
20 Faulconer.
21 COMMISSIONER FAULCONER: Yes.
22 CHAIRMAN VANDERLAAN: Motion carries?
23 COMMISSION SECRETARY MANDAPAT: Motion carries.
24 CHAIRMAN VANDERLLAN: Okay, is there any other
25 business before us Mr. Ott?

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EXECUTIVE OFFICER OTT: None.

CERTIFICATE

I, Michael D. Ott, certify that the foregoing is a transcript of electronic sound recording of the proceedings for Item 9 from the December 3, 2007 Local Agency Formation Commission meeting, which was technically corrected by LAFCO staff.

MICHAEL D. OTT

Date