



# County of Santa Cruz

## GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

701 OCEAN STREET, SUITE 330, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4073

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NANCY GORDON, DIRECTOR

January 3, 2011

Agenda: January 11, 2011

Board of Supervisors  
701 Ocean Street  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

### County Fire Mobile Equipment Purchase

Dear Members of the Board:

As your Board is well aware, the County Fire Department has operated with care and diligence in ensuring that operations can be maintained at a level that provides effective service to the public, maintains firefighter safety and manages to acquire and maintain reliable and necessary equipment and apparatus. Due to the economic conditions over the past few years, these tasks have proven to be very challenging, and have been somewhat mitigated by the 60/40 cost sharing of County Fire operations represented in the Cal Fire contract. Staff efforts continue toward maintaining the viability of our emergency response capabilities within the resource limitations, and educating the public of both these capabilities and limitations.

The recommendation before you today represents a purchase of mobile equipment that is critically necessary at this time, and in line with our maintenance of the viability of County Fire's response capacity. Earlier this year, a representative of the Insurance Services Office (ISO) contacted County Fire staff regarding initiating an ISO Public Protection Classification (PPC) grading of Santa Cruz County Fire's jurisdiction. The grading process is complex and measures existing structure fire suppression services through a review of all available aspects of fire service delivery. The ISO evaluation results in an assigned PPC for the area, and is one of several elements that insurance companies use to calculate property insurance premiums. PPCs range from Class 1 (superior property fire protection) to Class 10 (does not meet ISO's minimum criteria). The last ISO PPC grading of County Fire was in 1995. The proposed County Fire ISO grading will be scheduled for sometime in 2011.

In September 2010, County Fire staff met with ISO representatives to discuss the upcoming grading process. Since 1995, ISO has changed some of the criteria for PPC grading and the manner in which the evaluation is conducted. As a result of that meeting, potential deficiencies in County Fire's existing water deployment, from an ISO perspective, were identified. These include the necessary improvement needed in fire flow capability within County Fire and the imminent vehicle replacement required for aging equipment as established in the County Fire Department Five (5) Year Mobile Equipment Replacement Plan. These deficiencies could result in a less desirable ISO PPC for County Fire. Maintaining County Fire's current ISO PPC protects local taxpayers from a future potential increase in homeowner's insurance fees.

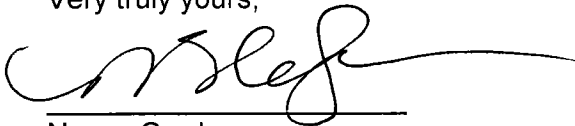
After exploring various alternatives to address these potential water deployment deficiencies, staff is recommending the purchase of a water tender this fiscal year. This addition would provide improved fire flow capability, thus reducing fire loss costs, as well as enhanced firefighter safety, which results in lower Workman's Compensation rates. Staff has researched various models, and has found a basic water tender specification which has proven performance reliability and which will meet the primary objective of greater water deployment capacity. It is likely during the next budget cycle that staff will recommend consideration be given to the purchase of a second water tender, dependent upon the fiscal circumstances at that time.

As stated in other Board reports, County Fire is operating under fiscal constraints. However, staff's analysis confirms that sufficient funds are available for this year's purchase, partially as a result of savings in the CAL FIRE reimbursement agreement, unanticipated revenue that will be realized this fiscal year for the use of County equipment on State incidents, and savings associated with the abandonment of the Fall Creek Station apparatus building project. Staff's recommendation was presented to the Fire Department Advisory Commission (FDAC) at their special meeting on November 10, 2010. One member of the Commission was absent, but those members present unanimously endorsed the purchase of a water tender this fiscal year. The FDAC also recently adopted the County Fire Department Five (5) Year Mobile Equipment Replacement Plan. The Plan's stated objectives include purchasing emergency response apparatus which "maintains or improves the current level of service" and is "cost effective to the citizens of Santa Cruz County." The purchase of a water tender to maintain current ISO ratings for County Fire's jurisdiction is in accordance with these operational objectives.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that your Board:

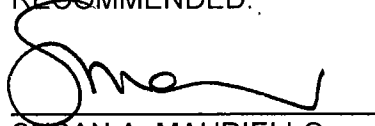
1. Authorize County Fire to purchase a water tender in fiscal year 2010/2011;
2. Approve a transfer of \$220,000 of appropriations in Contingencies to Fixed Assets as detailed in the attached AUD 74.

Very truly yours,



Nancy Gordon  
Director

RECOMMENDED:



SUSAN A. MAURIELLO  
County Administrative Officer

NCG/PH/DM

Attachment: AUD74

cc: County Fire Department  
Auditor-Controller  
Fire Department Advisory Commission

**COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ**  
 REQUEST FOR TRANSFER OR REVISION  
 OF BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS AND/OR FUNDS

0055

Department: County Fire/General Services

Date: 11/30/2010

TO: Board of Supervisors / County Administrative Officer / District Board

I hereby request your approval of the following transfer of budget appropriations and/or funds in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2011

AUDITORS USE ONLY			
DOCUMENT #	AMOUNT	L/N	T/C HASH
JE 6			

BATCH #	
DATE	Keyed By:

		T/C	INDEX	SUBJECT	USER CODE	AMOUNT	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION *
TRANSFER	TO	0 2 1	3 0 4 1 0 0	8 4 0 9		2 2 0 0 0 0 0 0	Mobile Equipment
	FROM	0 2 2	3 0 4 1 0 0	9 6 9 5		2 2 0 0 0 0 0 0	Contingencies

Explanation: Transfer funds from Contingencies (304100 subobject 9695) to Fixed Assets (304100 subobject 8409) to ~~xx~~ purchase a water tender.

Name Nancy Gordon

Title Director

Auditor-Controller's Action: I hereby certify that unencumbered balance(s) is/are available in the appropriations/funds and in the amounts indicated above.

Auditor-Controller, by *[Signature]*, Deputy Date 12/2/10

County Administrative Officer's Action:  Recommended to Board | | Approved | | Not Recommended or Approved

County Administrative Officer *[Signature]* Date 12/3/10

State of California } As the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Cruz, I do hereby certify that the foregoing request for  
 ss. transfer was approved by said Board of Supervisors as recommended by the County Administrative Officer by an order  
 County of Santa Cruz } duly entered in the minutes of said Board on

\_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_, By \_\_\_\_\_, Deputy Clerk

(A-C)\* Desc: \_\_\_\_\_ Item: - Budget Transfer

A-C Review		

Distribution: BRD.NAME AGENDA DATE ITEM NO.  
 White-Board of Supervisors Green-County Administrative Officer Goldenrod-Departmental Control Copy  
 Yellow-Auditor-Controller Pink-Originating Department

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**Alicia Murillo**

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**From:** cdbbosmail@co.santa-cruz.ca.us  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 11, 2011 12:09 AM  
**To:** CBD BOSMAIL  
**Subject:** Agenda Comments

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**Meeting Date :** 1/11/2011

**Item Number :** 16

**Name :** Russ Mackey

**Email :** rmackey411@comcast.net

**Address :** Bonny Doon

**Phone :** Not Supplied

**Comments :**

RE: January 11, 2011 Agenda, Item 16, "County Fire Mobile Equipment Purchase".

Dear Members of the Board of Supervisors:

The item before you today clearly demonstrates that County Fire, under the administration of Cal Fire, DOES NOT have a well-developed comprehensive plan for providing fire and emergency services within CSA 48.

This is the latest is a string of sudden changes from the plans presented to your Board and included in the Cal Fire Contract and the County Budget.

These changes in plans are often touted with flowery prose and claims of suddenly critical needs or unforeseen opportunities for increased safety, efficiency or cost effectiveness. Details are generally omitted; the current purchase request is lacking in detail. Claims of homeowner's insurance and Workers' Compensation savings are mentioned but specifics are not offered.

This purchase request claims that the Fire Department Advisory Commission (FDAC) endorsed this purchase "at their special meeting on November 10, 2010". It is not disclosed that the FDAC first voted in favor of the purchase at their October 13, 2010 meeting. The "special meeting" was necessary due to Brown Act violations. Cal Fire management brought this purchase suggestion to the FDAC for approval without proper public notice.

At this time, County Fire has NO long-range plan.

County Fire DOES NOT have a "Vehicle Replacement Plan", although a five page paper with such a title was approved by the FDAC at its October 2010 meeting. That paper is not a "plan" in any sense of the word.

While the County is considering asking the citizens to increase taxes or fees to support CSA 48 fire services, we are evaluating the track record of County Fire. We see abandoned plans, broken agreements, cost over-runs, and a severe lack of comprehensive forward planning.

The 2007/08 Grand Jury forwarded recommendations and conclusions to your Board:

Because Cal Fire officers concurrently manage both state resources and those of County Fire, conflicts

1/11/2011

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may arise when decisions are made to prioritize issues involving the state and county fire protection resources.

The Board of Supervisors should carefully scrutinize FDAC recommendations for Cal Fire services with the knowledge that these recommendations are heavily influenced and prioritized by Cal Fire officers who also manage County Fire.

The need for EFFECTIVE oversight of County Fire MUST be included as part of any discussion of about setting the level of fire taxes and fees. The wisdom of allowing a single party to be BOTH the administrator of County Fire AND the primary contractor to County Fire needs to be examined.

Thank you for your consideration.

Russ Mackey  
Bonny Doon

Steering Committee, Friends of Bonny Doon Fire

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1/11/2011