



Why now?

Due to the increased level of fire and emergency calls, there is a critical need for additional funding to meet industry safety standards by restoring the number of firefighters to three per state engine. This will better prepare Santa Cruz County Fire for large-scale wildfires and emergencies.

What is a Prop 218 Benefit Assessment Ballot Proceeding?

A sustainable and reliable option available to the County is to seek community support for a local property tax assessment, a Proposition 218 ballot proceeding, where property owners are the “voters” who decide on the measure.

This allows your local Santa Cruz County Fire Department to meet safety standards and replace aging equipment so our firefighters can continue to provide life-saving fire and emergency protection services.

The proposed funding would be an annual assessment on each property in the Santa Cruz County Fire – CSA 48.

How will the funds from the proposed measure be used?

The funds would be used to:

- ▶ Maintain the quality of local fire protection services.
- ▶ Ensure quick response times to 9-1-1 emergencies.
- ▶ Repair, upgrade or replace outdated fire engines and life-saving emergency and rescue equipment.
- ▶ Restore the number of local firefighters needed to keep our community safe.



Santa Cruz CSA 48

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What if the proposed assessment is not approved?

Without the additional funding:

- ▶ Santa Cruz County Fire Department would face further cuts to services, forcing it to continue to rely on outdated fire engines and life-saving emergency rescue technologies.
- ▶ One or more State fire stations would likely be closed during the non-fire season due to lack of staffing.
- ▶ With a reduction in services due to lack of funding, 9-1-1 response times would likely increase.

If a Prop 218 Benefit Assessment is approved by property owners, how much will it cost me?

California law requires that special assessments for improved fire protection services are based upon the calculated “special benefit” conferred on a property.

The special benefit for each parcel is calculated based upon these four factors:

- 1. Parcel-related fire risk factors:** Likelihood of fire ignition based upon parcel use.
- 2. Structure replacement value factors:** Relative cost to replace structure on parcel.
- 3. Fire hazard zone risk factors:** Very High, High Critical, Mitigatable Critical or None as designated by CAL FIRE.
- 4. Proximity (travel time) risk factors:** Relative travel time from the closest appropriate responding fire station.

The average single family resident would pay about \$151 per year, or \$12.60 a month, for fire services. This benefit assessment would

provide a stable, local source of funding for Santa Cruz County Fire. No funds from this assessment can go to the County’s General Fund. All funding generated by the assessment under consideration would go directly to Santa Cruz County Fire – CSA 48. The State cannot take this funding away.

How do the number of fire stations and staffing levels affect my insurance rates?

The Insurance Standards Organization (ISO) determines insurance premiums based on multiple criteria. “50% [of the ISO rating] comes from the quality of your local fire department including staffing levels, training and proximity of the firehouse.” Keeping our fire stations staffed to industry standards and open 24/7 year-round can help maintain our current ISO ratings.

Doesn’t the State or County provide funding for this?

No funding is available from the State or County. With a growing demand for fire protection and life-saving services and a limited operating budget, it’s becoming problematic to meet our community’s increasing demand for fire protection and life-saving calls.



For more information go to www.SantaCruzCountyFire.com or email us at: CSA48feedback@gmail.com

Who is Santa Cruz County Fire and what is County Service Area 48?

The Santa Cruz County Fire Department serves specific areas of unincorporated Santa Cruz County known as “County Service Area 48” (CSA 48). CSA 48 includes the communities of Bonny Doon, Davenport, Loma Prieta, Corralitos, Las Cumbres and the wider South Skyline area.

The County Fire Department operates in CSA 48 with five year-round volunteer fire stations in cooperation with five State fire stations. The County contracts with CAL FIRE to keep these State fire stations open during the non-fire season to ensure year-round fire protection and emergency response services.

Why should I pay attention to our local fire service?

Santa Cruz County Fire cannot maintain the current level of service in CSA 48 to protect you, your family and your property without additional funding to restore paid firefighter staffing levels to meet State recommended standards and to replace aging fire and life-saving emergency and rescue equipment.

Why does it matter if there is a delay in 9-1-1 response times?

The American Heart Association states that brain deterioration begins between four and six minutes after a person stops breathing. The average 9-1-1 response time for Santa Cruz County Fire – CSA 48 area is approximately 10 minutes. A third firefighter and reliable equipment allows your fire department to provide faster patient care and reduce response times.



Your Local Fire and Emergency Services Provider

Working to Maintain Life-Saving Fire Protection & Emergency Services



OUR CHALLENGES:

- Fact:** We have 25% fewer firefighters on staff today than we did 10 years ago and a declining number of volunteer firefighters (down from 110 to 60). Meanwhile, our number of emergency calls has grown steadily—approximately 22% since 2010.
- Fact:** For the safety of the public and first responders, the State recommends at least three firefighters per engine. Currently, Santa Cruz County Fire has a budget for two paid firefighters per engine.
- Fact:** To enter a burning structure or rescue a trapped victim, the law **REQUIRES** 4 firefighters: two firefighters to enter the structure and two outside for backup (the law has an exception to this rule in the event there is a known rescue). Funding for a 3rd paid firefighter means that, along with one volunteer firefighter, we would have the 4 firefighters required to quickly enter and perform a rescue or put out a fire.
- Fact:** Local fire stations are so short-staffed that when multiple emergency calls come in, we don't have the staff to respond. More than 56 times in 2018, ALL County Fire firefighters were out on emergency incidents, leaving no one available to respond to the next emergency call.
- Fact:** With climate change and drought, wildland fires are getting larger, faster and deadlier. We need to make sure we have the resources and staff to respond quickly to structure fires, wildland fires, and medical emergencies when they happen.
- Fact:** Without additional funds, the County will be forced to close a fire station, resulting in slower 9-1-1 response times in many areas of rural Santa Cruz County.



Survey:

COMMUNITY INPUT IS WELCOME! Take our survey at:
www.SantaCruzCountyFire.com

Why does it matter to the Santa Cruz County Fire – CSA 48 Community?

- ✓ The American Heart Association states that brain deterioration begins between four and six minutes after a person stops breathing. The average response time is 10 minutes in Santa Cruz County Fire – CSA 48.
- ✓ The number of emergency calls has increased by 22% since 2010.
- ✓ Fire emergency response vehicles need to be decommissioned after 20 years for continued reliability and safety. Currently, 3 out of 7 CSA 48 fire engines have been in service for at least 25 years.
- ✓ **BEAR FIRE** (November 2018) 10 acres burned and 1 structure destroyed;
BEAR FIRE (October 2017) 391 acres burned and 4 structures destroyed;
LOMA FIRE (September 2016) 4,474 acres burned and 28 structures destroyed.