



County of San Diego

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August 5, 2008

The Honorable Kenneth So
Presiding Judge, San Diego Superior Court
220 West Broadway
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Judge So,

On August 5, 2008, the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors approved responses to the six 2007-2008 San Diego County Grand Jury reports which addressed findings and recommendations to the County of San Diego. The Board further directed that these responses be sent to your office.

The six reports for which responses are attached are titled:

- **Past Grand Jurors Association Implementation Review Board**
- **Notification and Training in Child Protective Services**
- **Proud to be in County Procurement**
- **A Warmer World – A Challenge and an Opportunity**
- **Conditions and Management of Detention and Other Law Enforcement Facilities in San Diego County**
- **The Fire Next Time – Will We Be Ready?**

Since these are all the reports issued by the 2007-2008 Grand Jury that address recommendations to the Board of Supervisors or departments under its jurisdiction, the attached material represents the County's complete response for 2007-2008. If you have any questions, please contact me at (619) 531-5250.

Sincerely,

WALTER F. EKARD

Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment

cc: Board of Supervisors

ATTACHMENT F

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO RESPONSE TO 2007/2008 GRAND JURY REPORT "THE FIRE NEXT TIME—WILL WE BE READY?"

Issued May 29, 2008

Finding #02: The 2003 and 2007 wildfires have demonstrated a need for the creation of a consolidated County fire agency.

County Response: The County disagrees partially with the finding. There has been no evidence presented that a consolidated County fire agency would have materially impacted the region's ability to respond to either the 2003 or 2007 wildfires. Wind-driven fire events such as these quickly outstrip any local capability, and prove equally problematic in counties that have consolidated fire agencies as they are in those without consolidated fire agencies. Rather, the decision as to what level of consolidation is optimal must be made based upon the merits of response times and fire and medical coverage on a day to day basis in a community.

Finding #03: The use of Proposition 172 money to fund a County fire agency is appropriate.

County Response: The County disagrees. The County has adopted a fire consolidation plan funded with County General Fund dollars, without impacting the Proposition 172 funding of other Public Safety Agencies.

Finding #04: Due to the size and composition of a county that includes 18 cities, solutions need to be proposed and implemented as soon as possible.

County Response: The County agrees with the finding.

Finding #05: The County of San Diego does not comply with NFPA standards for emergency response time or emergency response locations

County Response: The County agrees that we do not comply with NFPA standards. However, the NFPA standards, which are national recommendations not regulations, apply to suburban structure fires; the unincorporated area of the county is largely rural.

Following the actions of the Board of Supervisors on June 25, 2008 (1), the unincorporated county will have travel times as follows;

- * 56 % in 5 minutes
- * 29 % in 10 minutes
- * 8 % in 20 minutes.

The longer wait times occur in the more rural areas where there is less density and population. These travel times are well within the County's General Plan requirements. Also, since 1991 the County has required automatic fire sprinklers in all new dwellings within wildland areas; with the fire districts this equates to over 90 percent of the unincorporated county. The requirement for automatic fire sprinklers coupled with the County's enhanced ignition resistive construction requirements mitigate longer travel times in the less dense areas. After assessing destroyed and saved homes within the 2007 burn areas, the County found that homes built using the County 2004 building codes, which include requirements for Class A roofing, dual glazed windows, interior sprinklers and strict outside venting, had a higher survival rate than homes built using older codes.

Finding #06: Emergency medical or life safety calls outnumber fire calls by three to one or at least 75% of calls for emergency assistance to Fire Fighters.

County Response: The County agrees with this finding.

Finding #07: Higher than average response times reduce the ability of responding agencies to prevent loss of life and property.

County Response: Generally, the County agrees with this finding. However, longer travel times occur in more rural areas where there is less density and population. As stated in our response to Finding #5, the requirement for automatic fire sprinklers and enhanced ignition resistive construction have been in place for several years to mitigate longer travel times in these less dense areas. In fact, after assessing destroyed and saved homes within the 2007 burn areas, the County found that homes built using the County 2004 building codes, which include requirements for Class roofing, dual glazed windows, interior sprinklers and strict outside venting, had a higher survival rate than homes built using older codes. Furthermore, the Board of Supervisor's action on June 25, 2008 (1) integrates career, reserve, and volunteer firefighters to ensure a blended response from multiple fire companies.

Finding #08: The staff of the Fire Prevention Unit in the Department of Planning and Land Use have sufficient expertise to serve as staff for a newly created fire agency.

County Response: The County agrees with this finding and appreciates the acknowledgement.

Finding #10: The County of San Diego needs an understanding of the sheltering capacity of the local Red Cross during the first 48 hours of a major disaster.

County Response: The County agrees with this finding.

Finding #11: Neither the County of San Diego nor any of the cities, including the City of San Diego, had a standard operating procedure for the operation of a mega-shelter.

County Response: The County agrees with this finding.

Recommendation 08-107: The 2007/2008 San Diego Grand Jury recommends that the County Board of Supervisors: Review the County Board of Supervisors Policy A-176 on the allocation of Proposition 172 funds with the objective of earmarking a portion of these funds for firefighting purposes.

County Response: This recommendation will not be implemented. The recommendation requests a review of Policy A-176, however it is believed the recommendation intends a review of Board Policy A-126. The recommendation—with the apparent desired objective of shifting funding from one public safety agency to another without adding any real additional funding to the overall effort, is not a prudent course of action, and would be unwise, compared to the superior course of action discussed in Recommendations 08-108 and 08-109. As discussed in the response to Recommendations 08-108 and 08-109, the County has identified and dedicated existing and new funding for the consensus consolidation of County Service Area agencies.

Recommendation 08-108: The 2007/2008 San Diego Grand Jury recommends that the County Board of Supervisors: Approve and fund the consolidation of fire agencies according to the Phase 1 plan of the Local Agency Formation Commission or a substantially similar plan.

County Response: The recommendation has been implemented. On June 25, 2008 (1), the Board of Supervisors adopted and funded a consensus fire agency consolidation plan entitled The Hybrid Plan Proposal. Through this plan, the fire protection service for over 1 million acres of the County's unincorporated area will be consolidated through the three phases of the plan.

Recommendation 08-109: The 2007/2008 San Diego Grand Jury recommends that the County Board of Supervisors: Create the position of San Diego County Fire Commander, either as a Deputy Chief Administrative Officer or to report directly to the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for Public Safety.

County Response: This recommendation has been implemented. After close consultation with stakeholders within the fire protection community, the County Board of Supervisors adopted the Hybrid Plan Proposal on June 25, 2008 (1). As part of this plan, the position of Fire Warden was created to provide administrative leadership and to work as a liaison between local fire marshals/chiefs and County land use officials. A Deputy Chief Administrative Officer has been given the role of Fire Warden.

Recommendation 08-110: The 2007/2008 San Diego Grand Jury recommends that the San Diego County Office of Emergency Services: Include the Executive Director of Volunteer San Diego, or designee, as a participant in Office of Emergency Services training exercises and as a representative at the Operational Area Emergency Operations Center in actual incidents.

County Response: This recommendation has been implemented. Volunteer San Diego participated in the County Earthquake Tabletop Exercise on April 24, 2008, and is integrated into the Emergency Operations Center staffing plans. Volunteer San Diego is scheduled to participate in the region's full scale exercise on Nov 13, 2008.

Recommendation 08-111: : The 2007/2008 San Diego Grand Jury recommends that the San Diego County Office of Emergency Services: Revise the County's Memorandum of Understanding with the San Diego/Imperial Counties Chapter of the American Red Cross to include a quantification of its ability to staff and equip emergency shelters, especially in the first 48 hours of a major disaster.

County Response: This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. The County concurs with the intent of this recommendation, which we believe is to ensure the Red Cross keeps the County informed of its full capabilities and limitations to perform emergency shelter operations. However, the appropriate mechanism to codify this requirement is through revising Annex G, the care and shelter annex of the Operational Area Emergency Plan. Annex G is currently undergoing a major revision to incorporate federal post-Katrina requirements, as well as lessons learned in Firestorm 2007. The revised Annex G will be published by Dec 31, 2008, and will include a provision for the quantification of Red Cross capabilities.

Recommendation 08-112: : The 2007/2008 San Diego Grand Jury recommends that the San Diego County Office of Emergency Services: Maintain at the Office of Emergency Services a complete roster, broken down by zip code, of County staff that has been trained in shelter operations. Roster should also indicate languages spoken other than English.

County Response: The recommendation has been implemented. The County concurs, and has modified its shelter disaster service worker roster to include addresses and additional languages spoken.

Recommendation 08-113: The 2007/2008 San Diego Grand Jury recommends that the San Diego County Office of Emergency Service: Request that the Red Cross roster of trained shelter staff be coded to identify language skills

County Response: This recommendation has been implemented. The County has made a request to the Red Cross that they consider language needs when making shelter staff assignments during emergencies.

Recommendation 08-114: The 2007/2008 San Diego Grand Jury recommends that the San Diego County Office of Emergency Services: Revise Annex G of the Operational Area Emergency Plan to include a plan for the establishment and operation of a mega-shelter

County Response: This recommendation has been implemented. The County has developed an appendix to Annex G, entitled "Mega-shelter Operations", to be adopted by the Unified Disaster Council as part of the full revision of Annex G. This revision is to be completed before the end of Calendar Year 2008.