



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors  
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: CEO  
Department No.: 012  
For Agenda Of: 12/11/2012  
Placement: Department  
Estimated Tme: 45 minutes  
Continued Item: No  
If Yes, date from:  
Vote Required: Majority

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**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Department Chandra L. Wallar, County Executive Officer, 568.3400  
Director(s)  
Contact Info: Dennis Bozanich, Assistant to the CEO, 568-3400

*John Wallar  
for CEO*

**SUBJECT:** State Responsibility Areas (SRA) Fire Prevention Benefit Fee Presentation by CAL FIRE

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**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: N/A

**Recommended Actions:**

Receive and file a presentation by CAL FIRE on the recently implemented State Responsibility Area Fire Prevention Benefit Fee.

**Summary Text:**

The implementation of the State Responsibility Area Fire Prevention Benefit Fee (SRA Benefit Fee) has raised a large number of questions from Santa Barbara County residents. Before considering possible actions, the Legislative Program Committee of the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors (Committee) is requesting additional information be provided to members of the Board of Supervisors and the public.

**Background:**

Many Santa Barbara County residents have begun receiving a new bill in the mail from the State of California Board of Equalization. The State Responsibility Fire Prevention Benefit Fee (SRA Benefit Fee) was a part of Assembly Bill x1 29 which was signed into law on July 7, 2011.

The \$150 fee per habitable structure is intended to fund new fire prevention programs in areas where the State of California is financially responsible for the prevention and suppression of wild fires. The SRA does not include land within incorporated cities or in federal ownership. The Santa Barbara County Fire Protection District does provide fire protection for the State Responsibility Area in Santa Barbara County under a contract with CAL FIRE. Owners of habitable structures within the Santa Barbara

County, Carpinteria/Summerland or Montecito Fire Protection Districts will receive a \$35 per habitable structure discount.

The implementation of the State Responsibility Area Fire Prevention Benefit Fee (SRA Benefit Fee) has raised a large number of questions from Santa Barbara County residents. Before considering possible actions, the Legislative Program Committee of the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors (Committee) deferred the formation of a specific SRA Benefit Fee legislative platform item until more information was presented to the full Board. Staff was directed to contact CAL FIRE and arrange the open session item to provide additional information to the Board of Supervisors. County residents are very aware of the importance of robust fire prevention.

The Committee identified a list of possible questions:

- What new prevention programs or projects are being funded with the SRA Benefit Fee? How much is expected to be raised in the Fire Prevention Fund? Who will make the decisions about grants from the Fire Prevention Fund?
- The SRA Benefit Fee is assessed on property owners per habitable structure. How was the information concerning habitable structures per property collected and verified? Is a second unit attached to a main residence considered a separate habitable structure for purpose of assessing the SRA Benefit Fee? A second residence on the same parcel? Were non-permitted habitable structures included in assessing the SRA Benefit Fee? What SRA Benefit Fee assessment is applied to agricultural, commercial or manufacturing structures?
- What is the purpose of assessing a flat SRA Benefit Fee on all habitable structures without regard to relative risks? For example, the same fee is assessed for suburban density residential properties miles from the wildland-urban interface as on large acre property directly adjacent to the wildland-urban interface.

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

SRA Fire Prevention Benefit Fee is paid by owners of habitable structures to the State Board of Equalization. At this time, it is unclear if this new state revenue will be available to local fire protection agencies for fire prevention activities.

**Attachments:**

**Authored by:**

Dennis Bozanich, Assistant to the County Executive Officer

**CC:**

Chief Michael Dyer, Santa Barbara County Fire Protection District