



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

Submitted on:
(COB Stamp)

Department Name: Fire
Department No.: 031
Agenda Date: January 27, 2026
Placement: Administrative Agenda
Estimated Time:
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Garrett Huff, Fire Chief / Fire Warden *GH*
Patrick Byde, Division Chief, Operations
SUBJECT: Local Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement #26-FI-11050700-002 between the Santa Barbara County Fire Department and the USDA Forest Service Los Padres National Forest

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: Risk Management

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Approve and authorize the Fire Chief to execute Local Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement 26-FI-11050700-002 between the Santa Barbara County Fire Department and the USDA Forest Service, Los Padres National Forest; and
- b) Authorize the Fire Chief to update the Operating Plan for the Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement on an annual basis for the term of this agreement; and
- c) Determine that the above-recommended actions do not constitute a project subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(4), finding that the actions are the creation of a governmental funding mechanism or other government fiscal activity, which do not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment.

Summary Text:

The purpose of this agreement is to provide for reciprocal fire protection, including mutual aid, reimbursable assistance, and coordination for the prevention, detection, management, and suppression of wildland fires on property within the protection areas or jurisdiction of the Santa Barbara County Fire Department (Fire Department) and the USDA Forest Service, Los Padres National Forest. Efficient suppression of fires depends upon early detection and fast initial attack, and due to topography, fuel, weather and accessibility, it is imperative that immediate action be taken by the nearest suppression force.

This Agreement is effective as of the date of the last signature on the Agreement and will be effective through May 31, 2027.

Discussion:

By entering into this agreement, it is mutually advantageous, and in the public interest, for the parties to coordinate their efforts in the prevention, detection, and suppression of wildfires in and adjacent to their areas of responsibility to limit duplication and improve efficiency and effectiveness. It is also mutually advantageous for both parties to provide support and participate in non-fire emergencies of national scope.

The USDA Forest Service, Los Padres National Forest has been a trusted partner in good standing since 1926. For many years, cooperative agreements have supported mutual aid assistance throughout every corner of the county. Agreements such as this establish clear financial responsibility and reimbursement mechanisms prior to incidents, ensuring consistency and reliability in reimbursement.

Background:

The Santa Barbara County Fire Department and the USDA Forest Service, Los Padres National Forest have a long history of cooperative fire protection in Santa Barbara County and have successfully worked side-by-side over the years on many major wildland fires. Both agencies have recognized the mutual benefits of working together to protect Santa Barbara County's citizens, visitors and natural resources. This Agreement formalizes the cooperative arrangement and provides the framework for operational and financial considerations.

As part of the agreement, the Fire Department and the USDA Forest Service, Los Padres National Forest annually review and coordinate operational response levels, dispatching procedures, communication plans, protection area maps, equipment and personnel availability, billing procedures, and any other items necessary for efficient and safe operations.

The agreement also provides for cooperation in fuels treatments and prescribed burning.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Actual revenues and expenditure will be dependent upon fire activity during the agreement.

Special Instructions:

Upon Board approval and execution, the Clerk is asked to provide to the Fire Department the following:

- Two copies of the Local Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement 26-FI-11050700-002 with original signatures
- One copy of the minute order

Attention: Rose Chaparro

Attachments:

Attachment A – Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement

Contact Information:

Patrick Bye, Division Chief, Operations

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