

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY BOARD AGENDA LETTER



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
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Agenda Number:
Prepared on: 6/21/06
Department Name: Board of Supervisors
Department No.: 011
Agenda Date: 6/27/06
Placement: Administrative
Estimate Time: 5 minutes
Continued Item: NO
If Yes, date from:

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Salud Carbajal, 1st District Supervisor
Brooks Firestone, 3rd District Supervisor

STAFF CONTACT: Michael F. Brown, County Executive Officer
John Scherrei, Fire Chief, 681-5507

SUBJECT: Extension of Fire Fuels Crew 1B

Recommendation:

That the Board of Supervisors:

Direct the Fire Department to utilize unanticipated Fire District property tax revenues and departmental savings to fund an additional Fuels Crew (Squad 1B), resulting in 7 days per week hand crew coverage during fire season.

Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:

The recommendation is primarily aligned with Goal Number 2. A Safe and Healthy Community in which to Live, Work, and Visit.

Executive Summary and Discussion:

The Fire Department currently operates a Fuels Crew that provides fuels reduction services and fire suppression coverage and response 7 days per week. The 7 days per week coverage is accomplished by splitting the crew into two squads, designated as Crew 1A and Crew 1B with each squad comprised of 12 crew members and a Fire Captain. As directed by the Board during Budget Hearings, funding for Crew 1A has been identified within the FY 2006/07 budget. Crew 1B has not been funded and is scheduled to be eliminated as of July 1, 2006, leaving Santa Barbara County without a guaranteed initial attack fire hand crew response during 3 days of every week.

Recent estimates from the County Assessor's Office indicate that Fire District property tax revenues will be greater than originally anticipated. These additional revenues could be used to fund the Crew 1B squad. In addition, the Fire Department has identified potential savings which could be used with the additional tax

revenues to fund the additional crew services. The recommendation would thereby allow continuation of two Fuels Crews without using additional General Funds.

Mandates and Service Levels:

Fuels Crews are not mandated and the recommendation would continue the current Fuels Crew service level.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

The estimated \$425,000 fire season costs for Crew 1B would be funded with unanticipated Fire District property tax revenues and/or other savings within the Fire Department. If the Board approves the recommendation, a budget revision for the allocation of the unanticipated revenue (4 vote requirement) will be forthcoming. There will be no facilities impacts as the Fuels Crews both (Crew 1A and 1B) would continue to operate out of their Cachuma base camp.