



Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Fire Chief Dave Winnacker

August 14, 2020

Anne N. Granlund, Foreperson
Contra Costa County
725 Court Street
PO Box 431
Martinez, CA 94553-0091,

Re: Grand Jury Report No. 2007, "Wildfire Preparedness in Contra Costa County"

Dear Ms. Granlund:

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) has completed a thorough review of the Grand Jury Report No. 2007, "Wildfire Preparedness in Contra Costa County". Attached, please find MOFD's responses to the request. As requested, we have provided responses to Findings 1 through 8 and Recommendations 2 and 4.

Please feel free to contact me if you need additional information.

Sincerely,

Dave Winnacker
Fire Chief

FINDINGS

The report made nine findings, of which eight pertain to MOFD. Finding F9 does not pertain to MOFD:

F1. During a Red Flag Warning, fire districts and fire departments in Contra Costa County often deploy pre-positioned firefighting strike teams to maximize the ability to respond to wildfires.

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District agrees with this finding.

F2. Fire districts and fire departments in Contra Costa County require property owners to perform weed abatement on their property to reduce the risk of fire spread.

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District agrees with this finding.

F3. Not all fire districts and fire departments in Contra Costa County use predetermined polygons and routing algorithms in their evacuation plans.

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District agrees with this finding.

F4. Fire districts and fire departments in Contra Costa County recommend that residents comply with law enforcement's orders to evacuate during an emergency.

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District agrees with this finding.

F5. Not all fire districts and fire departments in Contra Costa County use new technologies, such as ground sensors, drones, satellites, and fire spotting cameras, for early detection of fires.

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District agrees with this finding.

F6. The October 2019 Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) events disrupted emergency response efforts and communications in Contra Costa County.

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District agrees with this finding.

F7. Fire districts and fire departments in Contra Costa County are not always informed by PG&E when the utility is performing non-emergency maintenance work that presents a high fire risk during a Red Flag Warning.

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District agrees with this finding.

F8. An ordinance passed by the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District, requiring PG&E to give advance notice of non-emergency maintenance work that presents a high fire risk, enables the fire district to pre-position a team at the utility worksite and recover labor and equipment costs.

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District partially disagrees with this finding. This item is the subject of current litigation brought against San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District by PG&E. While MOFD agrees with the intent, the district intends to monitor the situation pending the resolution of legal challenges.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations R3, R5, R6, and R7 do not apply to MOFD. Recommendation R1 does not apply to MOFD as it has already been implemented.

R2. The Board of Directors of Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, East Contra Costa Fire Protection District, Moraga-Orinda Fire Protection District, Rodeo-Hercules Fire Protection District, and San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District should consider identifying funds to adopt or expand the use of new technologies, such as ground sensors, drones, satellites, and fire spotting cameras, to help detect fires in high-risk areas, by June 30, 2021.

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District agrees with this recommendation. The recommendation has been implemented. Cameras have been installed and actively utilized within the District for prescribed fires, and used in a series of small and large fires that have broken out in the County over the last several weeks. The Moraga-Orinda Fire District has implemented ground-based sensors. The existing technology was unable to produce the Sub-GHz radius and, as a result, are very ineffective at the 2.4 GHz range inside foliage. The Moraga-Orinda Fire District continues to work with several agencies on satellites to include successful tests with Planet Labs, Inc. to use the sensors to cue a satellite to detect fire. There is not much advancement to be done with currently available resources. In the near future, as low earth orbit satellites come online, this technology will rapidly advance. Large satellites are currently providing data available by through the State's Fire Clearinghouse that can be accessed at the Geospatial Technology and Applications Center (GTAC).

R4. The Board of Directors of Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, East Contra Costa Fire Protection District, Moraga-Orinda Fire Protection District, and Rodeo-Hercules Fire Protection District should review and consider mechanisms, such as the ordinance passed by the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District, that would enable their fire district to recover labor and equipment costs from PG&E for overseeing electrical utility work that presents a high fire risk, by June 30, 2021.

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board withholds its endorsement of this recommendation until current litigation is resolved. The recommendation requires further analysis. This item is subject of current litigation brought against San Ramon Valley by PG&E.