



RODEO-HERCULES FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
1680 REFUGIO VALLEY ROAD, HERCULES, CALIFORNIA 94547
(510) 799-4561 FAX: (510) 799-0395

August 12, 2020

Anne N. Granlund
2019-2020 Contra Costa County Civil Grand Jury
725 Court Street
Martinez, CA 94553

**Re: Rodeo-Hercules Fire Protection District's Response to Grand Jury Report
No. 2007, "Wildfire Preparedness in Contra Costa County"**

Foreperson Granlund:

In accordance with California Penal Code §933(a) et seq., please see the below response of the Rodeo-Hercules Fire Protection District to the findings and recommendations of the Grand Jury.

FINDINGS

1. 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.

Response: The Respondent agrees with the finding.

2. 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.

Response: The Respondent agrees with the finding.

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

Response: The Respondent agrees with the finding.

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

Response: The Respondent agrees with the finding.

5. 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.

Response: The Respondent agrees with the finding.

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

Response: The Respondent agrees with the finding.

7. 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.

Response: The Respondent agrees with the finding.

8. 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.

Response: The Respondent agrees with the finding.

In accordance with California Penal Code §933(b) et seq., please see the below response of the Rodeo-Hercules Fire Protection District to the findings and recommendations of the Grand Jury.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. The Board of Directors of Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, East Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, Moraga-Orinda Fire Protection District, Rodeo-Hercules Fire Protection District, and San Ramon valley Fire protection district should consider directing their Fire Chief to update wildfire evacuation plans and incorporate pre-determined polygons and advanced routing technology, by June 30, 2021.

Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented but is scheduled to be implemented in 2021. Together, the Contra Costa County Fire Chiefs Association supported a grant application to provide funding for the procurement and implementation of a software program that will provide a uniform evacuation planning platform. The \$300,000 grant was approved in late 2019 with funding to be available in late 2020. Procurement is expected to commence in late 2020 with implementation scheduled in mid-2021. The software will satisfy the recommendation included in this report.

- R2. The Board of Directors of Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, East Contra Costa County 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 sensor, drones, satellites, and fire spotting cameras, to help detect fires in high risk areas, by June 30, 2021.

Response: This recommendation has been implemented (partially) and also requires more analysis in some cases. The fire agencies within Contra Costa County have been working individually, and collectively, on researching or implementing many of the technologies referenced.

The Contra Costa Regional Fire Communications Center (CCRFCC), has access to real-time satellite detection of fires. This information can then be disseminated to responding agencies and used in dispatching additional resources. A cameras network has been installed in Contra Costa County that can be accessed by the individual agencies listed. These cameras are not equipped to automatically detect fires but can be used for confirmation and situational awareness upon receiving notification of a fire.

Drones are in use or being placed in use by several fire agencies, however the use of drones on or near active wildland fire incidents interferes with aerial firefighting efforts.

Regarding RHFPD and our limited budget, the ability to fund ground sensors would not be feasible and only obtainable through grant funding.

- R4. The Board of Directors of Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, East Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, East Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, Moraga-Orinda Fire Protection District, Rodeo-Hercules Fire Protection District, and San Ramon valley 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.

Response: This recommendation requires further analysis. It is unclear whether PG&E can be regulated by a local agency in a manner like the ordinance passed by the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District. This ordinance has been challenged in court by PG&E. Until a ruling has been passed down by the court this recommendation or implantation is not possible.

The Rodeo-Hercules Fire Protection District Board of Directors reviewed and approved this response at their meeting on August 12, 2020.

Sincerely,

Bryan Craig
FIRE CHIEF