

Bryan Scott
1300 Crescent Drive
Brentwood, CA 94513

February 11, 2019

Board of Directors
Contra Costa County Fire Protection District
651 Pine Street
Martinez, CA 94533

Dear Directors,

I'm writing today to ask that you investigate and make public the effect that delayed response time had on an East County tragedy.

As you are aware, there is an on-going public safety emergency in East County, a crisis that is caused by the severe and dangerous under-funding of the East Contra Costa Fire Protection District (ECCFPD). This has been documented in Grand Jury reports, in LAFCO studies, been the subject of an inter-governmental task force, and established by industry consultants.

Last week the headline on a KPIX5 CBS News segment was "Woman Killed In Mobile Home Fire On Bethel Island." It was posted online at 9:32 am on February 7, 2019.

The news segment described an emergency response to a mobile home fire on Bethel Island by the ECCFPD. The fire occurred at about 1 am Thursday morning, and the news report indicated that one woman died while four other persons were rescued.

The newscaster stated, and I quote, "Authorities say there is no fire station nearby, so they had to wait for crews from Antioch to respond."

ECCFPD receives the lowest rate of property tax funding in Contra Costa County, and has just three fire stations to serve 249 square-miles, and nearly 120,000 residents.

Industry standards call for at least 15 firefighters to fight a structure fire, like a mobile home fire, while ECCFPD has just nine firefighters on duty at any time, hence the need to wait for assistance from neighboring fire districts.

The neighboring district in this case was your fire district, ConFire, and the support Chief Carman and ConFire provide to the residents of East County is greatly appreciated.

However, when counting the number of Auto Aid "responses" and "engines-sent" ConFire provides to East County, there has been a roughly four-fold increase since ECCFPD's fourth fire station was closed, in June of 2017.

In an email exchange with me on this subject on January 24th, Chief Carman said “Something has to be done soon, as we are providing an unsustainable level of aid to East Con fire.”

In March of last year ECCFPD issued a press release which said, and I quote, “...the District is not able to provide service levels that adequately protect the community's residents at this time...”

Previously, an officer of ECCFPD has told LAFCO that three people had died due to slow response time.

And then, of course, there was last week.

I state these facts because it is obvious that the under-funding of the East Contra Costa Fire Protection District endangers the residents of East County.

Perhaps less obvious is the fact that because of the inter-connectedness of the fire district systems, this same underfunding endangers residents throughout the county, especially those served by ConFire.

You, members of ConFire’s Board, in your dual role as overseers of ConFire and leaders of county government, need to take action to correct this under funding emergency before more people die.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Bryan Scott

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CC: Jeff Carman, Fire Chief
David Twa, Clerk of the Board and County Administrator
Brian Helmick, Fire Chief