

## #17-04: El Dorado County Fire Protection Consolidation

The Grand Jury requested responses from the Board of Supervisors to Findings 3, 4, 5, and 6, and to all of the Recommendations. As the agency responsible for overseeing consolidations/annexations of districts within El Dorado County, the El Dorado County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) has also prepared a response to this Grand Jury Report.

### **FINDINGS**

F3. The Board of Supervisors, in conjunction with LAFCO, is best positioned to champion fire agency consolidation.

#### **Board of Supervisors Response:**

*The Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding.*

*However, the County and LAFCO cannot effect a consolidation alone. Efforts at agency consolidation can only be successful with interest from potentially affected fire districts, sufficient support from the community, and with dedicated leader to coordinate the effort.*

F4. The Fire Advisory Board, if reactivated, could help the Board of Supervisors with consolidation.

#### **Board of Supervisors Response:**

*The Board of Supervisors disagrees in part with this finding.*

*The Board of Supervisors agrees that the Fire Advisory Board could help study the potential for consolidation; however, the implication that the Fire Advisory Board is not active is not accurate. The Grand Jury's report states, "The Fire Advisory Board provided advice on fire-related issues to the Board of Supervisors; that Board is now inactive." A body called the "Fire Advisory Board," consisting of five chiefs from local fire districts, was created by Board of Supervisors resolution No. 152-80 on May 13, 1980. The members of the board were to be recommended by the El Dorado County Fire Chiefs' Association and appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The purpose of the body was to serve in a technical advisory capacity to the Board of Supervisors on fire-related issues. In March, 2017, it was determined that this board was subject to the Brown Act open meeting laws. Due to the fact that the members of the board, as fire chiefs, necessarily meet regularly in various venues and discuss countywide fire protection as part of their general duties, it became clear that it would not be feasible for these chiefs to serve in the Fire Advisory Board as it was composed at the time. After discussion with the Fire Chiefs' Association, the Board of Supervisors rescinded the resolution that had created the Fire Advisory Board and the Fire Chiefs' Association created a subcommittee by the same name, with*

*membership determined by the Association. The intent of the subcommittee is to act as a liaison between the fire districts countywide and the Board of Supervisors. This subcommittee is active and has been tasked by the Fire Chiefs' Association with working closely with the County on the many challenges related to fire and emergency medical services countywide.*

F5. Consolidation needs to be a well-planned effort and will take many years to accomplish.

Board of Supervisors Response:

*The Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding.*

F6. Consolidation is unlikely without adjustment of AB8 allocations.

Board of Supervisors Response:

*The Board of Supervisors agrees with this finding.*

*However, the Board would prefer an alternate revenue solution to support consolidation opportunities.*

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

R1. The Board of Supervisors should take the lead to consolidate County fire protection agencies.

Board of Supervisors Response:

*This recommendation will not be implemented because it is not reasonable, and further discussions are necessary. Please see the response to Finding F3 above. Pursuant to Penal Code, any Grand Jury recommendation that requires further analysis must be provide a timeframe of completion within six months of the date of publication of the grand jury report. It cannot be stated that these discussion and analysis will be completed within six months of the publications of the grand jury report.*

R2. The Board of Supervisors should reactivate the Fire Advisory Board.

Board of Supervisors Response:

*The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted. As described above, it is not feasible for the Board of Supervisors to reactivate the Fire Advisory Board as a body appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The Fire Chiefs' Association has designated a subcommittee to work with the County on issues related to fire and emergency services countywide.*

R3. The Board of Supervisors should direct the Fire Advisory Board to develop a plan for consolidation of fire protection agencies.

Board of Supervisors Response:

*The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted, and is not feasible. As stated above, it is not feasible to reconstitute the Fire Advisory Board as an appointive body of the Board of Supervisors. The Board has no authority to "direct" the current Fire Advisory Board, as it is a subcommittee of the Fire Chiefs' Association; however, the Board of Supervisors agrees that consolidation should be one of the options considered as it works with the Fire Advisory Board to identify long-term solutions to the funding and service delivery challenges facing districts countywide.*

R4. The Board of Supervisors should resolutely work to persuade agencies to implement the plan.

Board of Supervisors Response:

*The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted, and is not feasible. Please see response to Recommendation 3 above.*

R5. The Board of Supervisors should be open to reasonable AB8 allocation adjustments to support consolidation.

Board of Supervisors Response:

*This recommendation will be implemented, in that the Board of Supervisors will be presented with reasonable recommendations for AB8 allocation adjustments, recognizing the on-going financing needs of all affected agencies, as consolidation opportunities arise. However, as noted in the response to Finding 6, above, the Board would prefer an alternate revenue solution to support consolidation opportunities.*