



North County Fire Protection District

April 8, 2021

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor, State of California  
State Capitol, 1st floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Toni Atkins  
Senate President pro Tempore  
State Capitol, Room 205  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Anthony Rendon  
Speaker of the Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 219  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: COVID-19 Impacts on California’s Fire Districts**

Dear Governor Newsom, Pro Tem Atkins, and Speaker Rendon:

California’s fire protection districts continue to serve tirelessly as vital frontline responders during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic; however, access to relief funding for our agencies has been limited, causing an undue burden on fire protection and emergency medical services. This has been especially true for agencies that are special districts, whose work alongside other special district partners to gain direct access to federal stimulus funding has been disappointingly unsuccessful to date. With Congress passing the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, we now look to your Administration and Legislature to acknowledge the crucial role that first responders play in COVID-19 response and recovery, and support that essential work being provided throughout the State by ensuring that our agencies receive access to relief funding to offset the impact of response and recovery efforts.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on fire protection districts has been profound, both fiscally and operationally. More than one month before a State of Emergency Declaration was made in California, fire protection districts and EMS providers began changing operational response protocols as the CDC confirmed the first COVID-19 case in the State on January 26, 2020. These changes altered every aspect of how service is provided, including PPE protocols, patient care protocols, supply utilization and stocking, health and safety procedures, staffing plans, and exposure reporting, among a multitude of others. Each time new guidance and recommendations were issued by public health officials, operational changes were necessary. Implementing these changes came at a significant cost. Faster PPE and supply burn rates resulted in increased PPE and supply costs; increases that were exacerbated by supply chain disruptions. Workers’ compensation claims and overtime costs skyrocketed as maintaining sufficient staffing in a high-exposure environment became the norm. Labor costs were further increased to provide support to public health officials in their testing and vaccination efforts throughout the State.

While response and recovery costs were mounting, vital revenue sources for many districts were reduced, with fee-for-service EMS transport revenues plummeting for a good portion of 2020. The cumulative result of increased costs and reduced revenues has crippled fire protection district budgets throughout the State. For the Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District (Metro Fire), this impact has been a net loss of nearly \$5.5 million since March of 2020, with only an estimated \$1 million expected to be reimbursed through current available relief sources.

The collective mission of fire districts throughout the State is to ensure the safety of our communities. The losses experienced statewide as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic have compromised the capacity to fulfill this mission, resulting in reduced service, un-funded programs, and deferred capital projects, among others. While other industries and public service agencies have access to lifeline funding, this funding has not been made available to the very agencies that provide lifeline support to the community. In order to support the

essential work that fire districts provide in this State, we urge you to dedicate a portion of the State's allocation of the American Rescue Plan Act funds to fire districts in desperate need of relief funding.

Collectively,



Todd Harms  
Fire Chief  
Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District

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Brian Fennessy  
Fire Chief  
Orange County Fire Authority



Bill Tyler  
Fire Chief  
Novato Fire District

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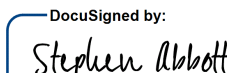

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Tim Shackelford  
Fire Chief  
Chino Valley Independent Fire District

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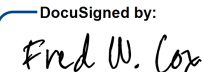

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Paige Meyer  
Fire Chief  
San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District

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Criss Brainard  
Fire Chief  
San Miguel Consolidated Fire Protection District

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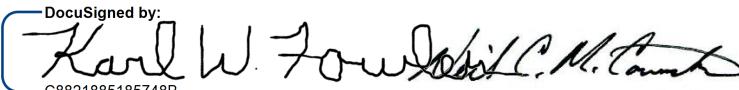
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Stephen Abbott  
Fire Chief  
North County Fire Protection District

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Fred W. Cox  
Fire Chief  
Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District

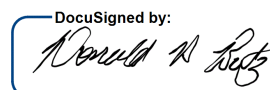
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Steve Leighton  
Acting Fire Chief  
North Tahoe Fire Protection District

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Karl Fowler  
Fire Chief  
South Placer Fire District

  
Neil McCormick  
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Don Butz  
Fire Chief  
Lakeside Fire Protection District



Diane Burgis  
Chair  
Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors and Contra Costa County Fire Protection District

- CC: The Honorable Nancy Skinner, Chair, Senate Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review  
The Honorable Jim Nielsen, Vice-Chair, Senate Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review  
The Honorable Phil Ting, Chair, Assembly Committee on Budget  
The Honorable Ving Fong, Vice-Chair, Assembly Committee on Budget  
The Honorable Mike McGuire, Chair, Senate Governance and Finance Committee  
The Honorable Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, Chair, Assembly Local Government Committee  
Committee Members, Senate Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review  
Committee Members, Chair of the Assembly Committee on Budget  
Keely Bosler, Director, Department of Finance