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STATE OF CALIFORNIA
GOVERNOR'S BLUE RIBBON FIRE COMMISSION

BEFORE THE GOVERNOR'S BLUE)
RIBBON FIRE COMMISSION,) TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
) November 13, 2003
Senator William Campbell, Chair)
Manhattan Beach, California)

CHAIR CAMPBELL: Ladies and gentlemen, we'd like to call this meeting to order at this time. We'd like to ask you to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of our country, and we'd like to ask Senator Nell Soto to lead us in that pledge. But before we begin the pledge, I'd like to have, uh, after we say the Pledge of Allegiance, that we stand for a moment of silence in memory of Steve Rucker, a member of the Novato Fire Department, who lost his life in the line of duty while combating the Fires we're looking into.

[Pledge of Allegiance is recited.]

[Moment of silence.]

CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, my name is Senator Bill Campbell, retired, and I'm chairman of this Blue Ribbon Fire Commission, and we'd like to do self introductions, so Chief, if we could start with Mike here on my left and then we'll go around there, and then we'll start with Rick and you can go around to the right.

CHIEF FREEMAN: Mike Freeman, Chair of the FIRESCOPE Advisory Board, Chief of Los Angeles County Fire Department.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER DUTTON: Robert Dutton, California State Assembly, 63rd Assembly District.

SENATOR SOTO: Nell Soto, 36th Senatorial District, San Bernardino area, right (**unintelligible**) the Fires.

MAYOR VALLES: Judith Valles, the Mayor of the City of San Bernardino.

1 MR. FUKUTOMI: David Fukutomi, Federal Coordinating Officer, Federal Emergency
2 Management Agency.

3 MR. HAMILTON: Larry Hamilton, I'm the Director of Fire and Aviation for the Bureau of Land
4 Management, representing the Department of Interior.

5 MS. FORBES: I'm Alice Forbes. I'm the Assistant Director and Director of Operations at the
6 National Honor Agency Fire Center, sitting in Jerry Williams and the Department of Agriculture.

7 MR. VERGA: I'm Pete Verga, I'm Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Homeland Defense
8 and the Department of Defense.

9 MS. DELGADO: I'm Marilyn Delgado, Governor's Office of Indian Affairs, and I'm here
10 representing California tribes.

11 MR. WOLF: My name's Bob Wolf, president CDF Firefighters' Local 2881 and I'm here as
12 District Vice President of California Professional Firefighters.

13 MR. ROPER: Bob Roper, Ventura County Fire Chief, representing Chair of the Board of Ventura
14 County, Judy Michaels.

15 MR. FREEBAN: I'm Spencer Freeban with Congressman Jerry Lewis's office.

16 CHAIR HANSBERGER: I'm Dennis Hansberger, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, San
17 Bernardino County.

18 MR. MARTINEZ: I'm Rick Martinez, the Acting Director for the California Office of Homeland
19 Security.

20 MS. TUTTLE: Andrea Tuttle, Director of the California Department of Forestry and Fire
21 Protection.

22 ASSEMBLYMEMBER KEHOE: Assembly member Christine Kehoe, 76th Assembly District in
23 San Diego.

24 DIRECTOR GONZALEZ: Guillermo Gonzalez, Deputy State Director, representing Senator
25 Feinstein.

26 CHIEF PRATHER: I'm Chip Prather, member of the Governor's Emergency Counsel and the Fire
27 Chief of the Orange County Fire Authority.

28

1 CHIEF ZAGARIS: Kim Zagaris, Fire Chief at the Office of Emergency Services.

2 CHIEF BAMATTRE: Bill Bamattre, I'm the Fire Chief, City of Los Angeles, and I chair the
3 California Metropolitan Fire Chief's Association.

4 CHIEF BOWMAN: Jeff Bowman, Fire Chief, City of San Diego.

5 MAYOR MURPHY: Dick Murphy, Mayor of the City of San Diego.

6 MR. MCCAMMON: Bill McCammon, president of the California Fire Chief's Association and
7 Fire Chief of the Alameda County Fire Department.

8 MR. SEDIVEC: Jeff Sedivec, president of the California State Firefighter's Association.

9 MS. BURKE: Yvonne Burke, chair of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors.

10 MR. COX: Greg Cox, chairman of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors.

11 MR. JACKSON: Jimmy Jackson, representing Senator Deirdre Albert, 39th District.

12 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you all very much. I'd like to discuss a couple of issues with you.
13 You have the Blue Ribbon handout book, and I want you to look at that for – ah – we think we've covered
14 most of the things that you'll need. One of the things that I did request, and that's on Tab 3, and that is
15 because we do tend to use our own language in the fire service. I've asked them to come up with a glossary
16 of terms, and what they mean, so this will be very beneficial to, uh, I know the fire people per se
17 understand all these terms, but the rest of us don't. And so if you look there, we've given you what I think
18 is a pretty good idea -- when they refer to these various terms, you'll be able to see them and have a pretty
19 good understanding about that which they are talking. On Tab 4, at the back of Tab 4, you have the maps
20 that will show the area to which we'll be referring; particularly Deputy Director Jim Wright will be
21 referring in his presentation. It might make it a little easier to see. Governor Davis is on his way, his
22 plane's a little late, he should be here, uh, I guess shortly is the best term, but he is on his way. Uh,
23 Governor Elect Schwarzenegger is not able to be with us today, and he has asked me to read the following
24 statement, and there's a handout of that statement for the media, if they want.

25 The devastating fires in Southern California have done untold damage, and have tested the will and
26 resilience of the California people. Most notably, we have asked a great deal of our firefighters who
27 selflessly risked their lives to protect people they do not know. The fires exacted a terrible price, more than
28 700,000 acres burned. Over 3,500 homes destroyed, and 22 lives lost. Many more lives have been

1 profoundly affected by the loss of family and property. We now begin the task of restoring communities
2 and rebuilding lives. We will identify the cause of these fires, and do what is necessary to prevent such a
3 horrible tragedy from happening again. This special commission will conduct a thorough review of the
4 wild fires, and present recommendations to make California less vulnerable to disaster of such enormity in
5 the future. I look forward to the findings of the commission, and working with federal, state and local
6 officials, to preserve the safety of Californians and our property. Through the actions we take, we will
7 serve the legacy of those who fought and perished in the fire.” Governor Elect Schwarzenegger’s
8 statement.

9 I’d like at this time to, uh, Governor Davis has comments, when he arrives, we will deal with his
10 comments. I have an opening statement that I’d like to read, and then, if you’ll see on your agenda, we’re
11 going to go to Deputy Director Jim Wright and Dallas Jones, the head of the Office of Emergency Services,
12 to do a preview of the fire, the status before the fire, during the fire, and after the fire.

13 “Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and members of the Blue Ribbon Commission. Although
14 it is with much sadness, I am honored to serve on the chair of this Blue Ribbon Fire Commission,
15 established by Governor Davis and Governor Elect Schwarzenegger, to review the states efforts to combat
16 the recent siege of destructive wildland Fires that literally engulfed many areas and damaged several
17 communities throughout southern California. As the former chair of the California State Legislature Select
18 Committees on Fire Services, and then the Joint Committee on Fire/Police Emergency and Disaster
19 Services for over 16 years, I have personally seen and witnessed the sorrow, the pain, and the destruction
20 caused by wildland conflagrations that periodically strike our state. I have sat in this position before,
21 reviewing what steps we have taken at the local state and federal level by both government and the public
22 to prevent and combat and recover from the destructive wildland fires. Every review I previously
23 participated in clearly revealed two absolutes.

24 First, we owe much to the heroic men and women that put their lives before the flames, and to save
25 our lives and property. And second, we cannot continue to put them in harm’s way without doing
26 everything we can to prevent such destructive fires. California has a constant and growing population, with
27 an ever-increasing demand for new housing. We must recognize that as development moves into the
28 wildland areas, we must recognize the use of sound, effective, fire safe building standards and codes.

1 Furthermore, we cannot continue those policies that impede our efforts to reduce dangerous fuel loads, or
2 hamper our fire protection and fire fighting efforts. We have long known that California is a fire prone
3 state. Our Mediterranean climate, long dry summers, the Santa Ana winds, chaparral, brush, rangelands,
4 wooded foothills and forested mountains make California a prime target for wildland fires. When you add
5 to this the combination of California's burgeoning population, the residential development of our wildland
6 areas, environmental and air quality regulations that stop the implementation of effective vegetation and
7 force management programs, budgetary restrictions, and the malicious, cowardly acts of twisted persons, it
8 is no wonder why California experiences the nightmare of periodic wildland conflagrations. In fact, it is a
9 testament to the noble professionalism of our federal, state, and local firefighters that we do not experience
10 such terrible, destructive fire more frequently. As we begin our review over the state's recent efforts in
11 combating the series of devastating fires that besieged Southern California over a two-week period, I want
12 to emphasize that this Blue Ribbon Commission is not on a witch hunt to place blame on someone or some
13 agency for the losses sustained. We are not here to simply quell someone's desire to blame another for a
14 financial loss. Instead, this hearing will review the events leading up to, and occurring during, the recent
15 fire siege. In order to determine what we can do to prevent future devastating fires, we must also consider
16 what must be done to help facilitate the ability of our firefighters in meeting the challenges of combating
17 such wildland conflagrations. That is the responsibility that has been placed upon this commission. And it
18 is a responsibility we all take seriously. We recognize that the most important thing we could do is to
19 develop the recommendations that stress pre-fire management programs, which involves the cooperation of
20 federal, state, and local governments, as well as the local community and individual property owners. For
21 today's hearing I have asked Jim Wright, Deputy Director of Fire Protection for the California Department
22 of Forestry and Fire Protection, and Dallas Jones, Director of the Office of Emergency Service, to give us a
23 general description of the impacted areas prior to the fire starting, such as terrain, fuel conditions, weather
24 conditions, residential density, and construction access, etc. DEPUTY DIRECTOR WRIGHT will then
25 provide us with a chronological overview of the fires and the challenges confronting our firefighters during
26 this October siege. Please note the commission is well aware that federal, state and local resources were all
27 involved in fighting this recent siege of fires. It was a coordinated cooperative effort that was only
28 successful because of their teamwork.

1 However, for today's hearing, I am simply starting with the basic overview upon which the
2 commission can build. This initial hearing will provide the commission with the foundation of information
3 upon which we can base more focused reviews. I am currently planning four to five additional hearings to
4 allow us to comprehensively address more narrowly defined areas of interest. This will also allow the
5 commission an opportunity to schedule the appropriate persons or agencies to make presentations before us
6 and address our concerns. Following Deputy Director Wright's presentation, we will have a question and
7 answer period, and following that I will propose an outline for future agendas, meeting dates and locations
8 for the commission members to consider. With that, we'd like to welcome Jim Wright, Deputy Director for
9 Fire Protection, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, and Dallas Jones, the Director of the
10 Office of Emergency Services. Deputy Director Wright and Director Jones, welcome, and thank you for
11 your participation on such a short notice.

12 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WRIGHT: Thank you, Senator Campbell.

13 CHAIR CAMPBELL: I'm gonna ask – I think we have to speak pretty close to the mike, so for
14 some reason, it must be my hearing, but it's also, I don't think the hearing is – the sound is that loud.

15 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WRIGHT: Okay. Thank you, Senator Campbell, and distinguished
16 members of the Blue Ribbon Commission. It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to come speak to you
17 today to provide an overview of the fire siege that occurred in Southern California, and what I'd like to do
18 is, through my overview, provide some background information and start from the week of the 20th and
19 walk through the fire activity that was occurring not only in Southern California, but also the entire state of
20 California issues we were dealing with.

21 In my mind, the southern California fire siege was definitely a history-altering event. We saw the
22 acres burned, and the – and the over 700,000 acres burned in the fires. At the height of the firefighting,
23 over 15,000 of your firefighters were engaged in the firefighting efforts. Over 3,600 residential structures
24 were destroyed, 36 commercial properties, 1,100 outbuilding, and unfortunately there were 22 fatalities,
25 including one firefighter and nearly 250 injuries.

26 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Jim, if I might interrupt just a moment. The Governor's a few – about 10,
27 about 5 to 10 minutes away and when he comes in, I'd like to have him make his opening statement and
28 then he'll join us here on the podium to listen and ask questions.

1 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WRIGHT: Certainly.

2 CHAIR CAMPBELL: So if I interrupt you at that time, I apologize ahead of time.

3 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WRIGHT: Okay. With this siege, the California fire service system, the
4 integrated system that is the best in the nation. And this system includes local government, state, and
5 federal Firefighting agencies. And this system was literally tested under Fire during this Fire siege event.
6 The scenario we were looking at on a statewide basis, as you know we have been struggling with a
7 prolonged drought period within California in total. Uh, warm temperatures and low humidity has affected
8 the fuels in California, both north and south state. This drought has also caused a serious situation in the
9 inland empire areas, mountain area, in San Bernardino and Riverside, and San Diego counties, where a
10 bark beetle infestation has just expanded beyond anyone's belief. In essence we have, because of this bark
11 beetle infestation, nearly 500,000 acres of dead standing trees -- a true kindling box waiting for a Fire to
12 occur. On Monday, October 20, on a statewide perspective, and our Fire season to date, to that point in
13 time, had been relatively mild. We've had some flurries of Fire activity, the months prior we had a
14 lightening series go through the coast area of Santa Clara County and up through the north coast, so we had
15 activity, it was beginning to happen. In October --

16 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Jim, if I may interrupt one more time. I apologize. There is a powerpoint
17 presentation and some maps that are going on the wall behind us, and I want to know if we can turn down
18 the lights to the extent that we can still see, but have a clear picture of what's on the wall. Can you see
19 your notes?

20 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WRIGHT: I'm fine.

21 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Okay. Can we go with that level; is it a problem for anybody? Okay.
22 Thank you.

23 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WRIGHT: If I can continue, the map that will come up here shortly, as I
24 speak on the fires, the symbolism of a fire will show up on that map to give you a geographic perspective
25 of where those fires were occurring.

26 Go back to October 20. That day, fire activity throughout the state was about 32 vegetation fires
27 that had burned a total of 20 acres. Not a lot of activity, truly, and still a fire season period. And the next
28 day, Tuesday, October 21, CDF received a weather advisory, indicating that we would experience north

1 winds in the northern portion of the state that would lead to continued dry conditions, and wind conditions
2 in the north state, and continue to be dry in the foreseeable future. We also received a weather condition of
3 continued warm temperatures, low humidity, and gusty, northeast winds, in essence, the Santa Ana's
4 developing in southern California. That afternoon in the noon time hour, the Roblar Fire started on Camp
5 Pendleton in San Diego County. This fire immediately started drawing federal firefighting agency
6 resources, as well as state and local government resources, to respond and deal with that fire.

7 CDF forces in the north, because of the wind conditions predicted, initiated staffing patterns and we
8 put on additional engine crews, dozers and staff lookouts in anticipation of the wind events. At a little after
9 2:00 p.m. on October 21, the Grand Prix Fire starts in the western San Bernardino County . . .

10 CHAIR CAMPBELL: I'm sorry. Either my eyesight improved dramatically –

11 SOMEONE: There you go.

12 [Laughter.]

13 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Oh. It didn't. The miracle didn't occur.

14 [Laughter.]

15 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Go ahead.

16 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WRIGHT: Okay. The Grand Prix Fire starts at 2:22 p.m. near the
17 community of Rancho Cucamonga. So at this point there's two Fires that are developing into extended
18 attack Fires, meaning they are beyond the initial attack phase and requires additional resources to respond
19 and deal with those incidents. Two hours later, shortly after 4:00 p.m., the Pass Fire starts in Riverside
20 County in **Richie** Canyon, which straddles both Riverside and San Bernardino counties. So now, southern
21 California is dealing with three fires in the southern California area, in San Diego, Riverside, San
22 Bernardino counties. With this, CDF units in San Diego County initiated staffing patterns to bring on more
23 resources to cover engines, crews, 24 hours a day. Our federal counterparts are doing the same activities to
24 bring on resources. And through that afternoon and into the evening, these fires, these three fires, were
25 showing extreme fire behaviors, and by that meaning, because of the conditions that the fuels have been,
26 where they've been dry, combination of low humidity, just dead fuels out there in Southern California,
27 these fires were burning hot, they were burning very erratic, and they were burning fast. And with the
28 Santa Ana wind influence on it, obviously the fast travel of these fires were gaining the upper hand in size.

1 On October 22, again there was a lot of preparation going for additional staffing. Our firefighting
2 resources in Los Angeles County, Orange County, Ventura County, were also starting staffing patterns to
3 bring on additional forces and stage them in wind prone areas. Weather conditions –

4 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Excuse me again. For the members of the panel, this map, if you can't see
5 it back there, is in Tab 4, the first map.

6 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WRIGHT: Okay. Continuing. Our weather conditions on that day
7 continued gusty winds throughout the day. We're still battling three Fires that are approaching a major Fire
8 situation in those Fires. On October 23, again weather – dry, warm, Santa Ana wind conditions. At 3:30
9 p.m. the Piru Fire starts near the community of Ojai. The Grand Prix Fire in western San Bernardino
10 County is still burning fast and hot, with very erratic Fire behavior, and also the Piru Fire is reporting
11 similar Fire behavior. Later, in early evening, a Fire broke out in Butte County called the Palermo Fire.
12 Now I bring this to your attention because as you know, with these major Fires developing in Southern
13 California, the Fire rescue mutual aid system is gathering and pulling resources from areas outside
14 Southern California down to help augment and support these Fire operations. So as we were doing that, on
15 a statewide perspective, we're watching the resources that we're drawing down from other areas of the
16 state, and also still being concerned about the Fire potential that the northern portion of the state has. So,
17 these Fires, as I hope to illustrate to you that although our focus were the devastating Fires here in Southern
18 California, we still had Fire risk in the northern portion of the state to deal with.

19 On October 24, again the Grand Prix Fire, being a major Fire situation, had closures of Interstate
20 15 and the 210 freeways. Extreme Fire behavior was reported, was spotting and torching the vegetation
21 fuels. That same day CDF cancelled all days off for CDF Fire suppression personnel, to keep them
22 available for Fire assignments in Southern California. At approximately 10:00 a.m. the Olinda Fire starts in
23 Shasta County. Weather reports for the northern region are still moderate to strong northeast winds and
24 low humidity. Keep that in mind, because we were still continuing going to the north to draw resources to
25 Southern California.

26 At 1:43 the Verdale Fire starts near the city of Santa Clarita, Los Angeles County. At 3:00 p.m.,
27 the Rancho 8 Fire starts in Tehama County, and at 3:05, the Happy Fire starts in Santa Barbara. So you can
28 see these first few days we were getting a scattering of Fires throughout the Southern California counties

1 from Santa Barbara, south. The Verdale Fire that afternoon is reporting evacuations taking place. The
2 Grand Prix Fire still exhibiting problems in suppression activities, and widespread mandatory evaluations
3 in Rancho Cucamonga.

4 October 25, shortly after 9:00 a.m., the Old Fire starts in the northern portion of the city of San
5 Bernardino. Again, the fire conditions at the initial stage of the Old Fire were extreme Fire behavior,
6 predominately a wind-driven fire, and spotting. Five thousand residents were immediately threatened with
7 this fire. And many of you can remember back, the Panorama Fire was a fear in each and everyone's mind
8 for the San Bernardino area, that that was a replay. At noon, CDF cancelled all days off for fire
9 suppression personnel in Northern California. At 2:41 the Spring Fire began in Napa County. And these
10 fires that were occurring in Northern California, I'd like to say they were minimal acres, we were able to
11 maintain a standing force of sufficient Fire suppression resources from both local, state and federal assets to
12 provide an adequate level of response, given the threat level we were dealing with in Northern California.
13 As you can see, the initial attack capabilities still remain in Northern California with doing their job.

14 At 5:00 p.m., CDF requested eight National Guard helicopters to join the forces of the aerial
15 operations occurring for the southern California fires. At 5:37 p.m. the Cedar Fire began in San Diego
16 County. That evening we were still experiencing strong Santa Ana wind conditions across the southland.
17 The Verdale Fire was reporting fire activity extreme, with surfacing Santa Ana winds, 20 to 30 miles an
18 hour, and gusts up to 45 miles an hour, producing spotting up to a half to a mile ahead of the fire. And in
19 some of the projections of that fire's burning intensity, it was consuming 2,000 to 3,000 acres per hour.
20 Give you an idea of the intensity and the fire behavior that we were experiencing at that time. Also that
21 afternoon the Simi Fire began near the city of Moorpark.

22 During this time, as these fires were occurring, there was a lot of things occurring behind the
23 scenes in the command and control systems throughout local, state and federal firefighting agencies. There
24 were conference calls convened to work with the area and regional mutual aid coordinators to get a status
25 of the resources still available throughout the state. These conference call meetings called the fire service
26 leaders together and we discussed what where those potentials for the outlook of the next few days, the
27 status of the fires that were occurring, and projections of what those fires may need as far as additional
28 resources. **Close communication was maintained during this time, and at some of those things that**

1 **the activity that goes on behind the scenes that many folks do not realize what's happening.** You see
2 the fire engines running up and down the highways, going to fires and stuff, and I can sure attest there was
3 a lot of activity going on behind the scenes with the majority of the fire service leaders, many of whom are
4 present here today and can attest to that we were really struggling and making sure we had a balance
5 standing force of remaining firefighting asset that we could have for other potential fires.

6 On October 26, at 1:30 a.m., the Paradise Fire begins near the city of Valley Center in San Diego
7 County. With the Cedar Fire burning, the Paradise Fire burning, and gaining size with these under a Santa
8 Ana wind condition, you can imagine the size and intensity of these were gaining. Again, hat morning the
9 Otay Mine Fire began in southern San Diego County. So again, our map is filling up with fires and many
10 of these leading to major fire situations and again, each fire calling for additional resources to help them
11 with their fire suppression activities. What happens in the overall system of the incident command system
12 is that MACS comes into play, and your glossary of terms has a lot of these spelled out. The MACS is the
13 Multi Agency Coordination System, and that is where the fire service entities in southern California, local
14 government, state and federal all join. And during this time period the leaders of the fire service agencies
15 had agreed to relocate to the Operations Coordination Center in Riverside where we use the base command
16 center operation to where these decisions on allocating resources to the incidents in need were taking place.
17 This system takes into consideration the threat, the current fire situation, the damages occurred, the
18 resources needed, and the projections of an incident being successful with allocation of resources provided
19 them.

20 During this same time period, we were, because of the Santa Ana wind conditions, we had
21 situations where there were a lot of questions being raised about aerial firefighting resources. Because the
22 intensity of the winds that were being experienced, aerial firefighting resources, fixed wing and both rotary,
23 were grounded at times and there were a lot of questions why. The public was crying, why? There's
24 houses burning, why aren't there aircraft flying? Many of us know that under high wind conditions, and
25 especially anything over 35 miles an hour, these air tanker pilots that we have, they fly dangerous missions
26 on just the everyday dire they fly on. Given these conditions that they're flying being extreme, we add to
27 the flight safety risk that those pilots fly in. We also make, by trying to do that, the efficiency of those
28 aerial firefighting resources diminish. To cite an example, the retardant. Someone will see an aircraft

1 flying over and dropping the red stuff. The Fire retardant that's dropped from the aircraft, that lands on the
2 fuels, that retards the fire spread until ground resources can get there. If you watch some of the footage,
3 you see that retardant blowing away in the wind. It didn't do anything, except provide a visual effect of
4 comfort to the public. That's a lot of money that blew away there. And we also have to be cost conscious
5 here, in days of cost containment. Now that cost containment concern didn't affect any of our efforts to
6 provide suppression efforts or resources to these fires, but I want to make a point of this because we have to
7 do a better job of educating the public that sees this and have been lulled into a comfort level that aircraft
8 extinguish fires. Aircraft is a very important tool –

9 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Excuse me, ladies and gentlemen, let me introduce the distinguished
10 governor of the State of California, the Honorable Gray Davis. Welcome, Governor Davis.

11 [Audience claps.]

12 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Governor Davis is well recognized for his support of public safety in the
13 State of California.

14 GOVERNOR DAVIS: Hey, Bill, how are ya?

15 CHAIR CAMPBELL: I'm fine. Excuse me; I have trouble getting up and down.

16 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Jim, if we could, we'd like to take a little break here and, uh, at this time
17 Governor Davis has an opening statement to make concerning the commission and the events that's
18 occurred.

19 GOVERNOR DAVIS: Senator tells me you have to get close to the mike. Can you hear me?
20 Oops, I don't wanna dislodge your diet Coke there, or diet Pepsi. Uh, first of all I want to thank everybody
21 for being here today, and tell you how much I appreciate you spending your time. You know, it is
22 customary for many agencies after a disaster of this magnitude to do an after-action report and see what we
23 did right, what we could improve on, and um, so what we're, what this commission that I put together with
24 the cooperation, assistance and concurrence of Governor-elect Schwarzenegger intends to do is just that.
25 Uh, what did we do right, what can we do better in the future, um, how can we even improve upon what I
26 think was very good coordination between some 70 different agencies. I want to say, just at the outset, how
27 proud I am of every agency represented here today. More than 70 agencies participated in this effort to put
28 out what probably will turn out to be the worse wildland fires in the state's history, and they did so

1 selflessly, they did so acting through consensus, and I'm proud of the work that we've done together to
2 minimize the damage from what was a terrible disaster. I also am extraordinarily proud of the firefighters,
3 whether they came from the US Forest Service, or the Department of Forestry, or from the cities and
4 counties that were affected directly by the fire, or from mutual aid. At its peak we had more than 15,000
5 Firefighters battling these devastating blazes. They came from all out California, they came from many of
6 our western states, they even came as far away as Canada. These firefighters did not hesitate. They didn't
7 ask why are we going. They put on their uniforms, they got in their trucks and sometimes drove hundreds
8 of miles in order to protect the property of people they had never even met. All of these firefighters in my
9 judgment are heroes. They have all done extraordinary work to defend people's property and lives. I think
10 I know everyone, or know of everyone on this dais, and I know you know whereof I speak, and you've seen
11 first hand the courage and resolve of people who may live up in San Francisco, or as some of us were, in
12 Novato yesterday, coming down to San Diego to fight a fire, or coming down to Simi Valley, or coming
13 down to San Bernardino or Riverside. But that is the beauty of our mutual aid program. And the fact that
14 people will respond without hesitation, without question, and know that if there is a fire in the community
15 from which they came, other fire trucks will come in behind them to protect the community left in order to
16 protect yet another community that was in dire need, so it is a wonderful system that has served our state
17 well. But we should not be reluctant to scrutinize it and see if there aren't ways in which to improve it.
18 Beyond that, I know there were a number of concerns about access to military equipment and on occasion
19 other federal equipment. I do think that ought to be one of the main objectives of this commission is to see
20 if we can speed the availability of equipment that can help us put out fires. My own personal view is that
21 one person, be it the governor or be the head of the U.S. Forest Service, or the head of CDF, ought to have
22 the authority to identify the most effective piece of equipment in America and whether it's in the hands of
23 the military or some civil contractor, or a bureaucracy, access that equipment, put it to work, to help put out
24 the fire. As we know, that is now currently the law and I hope this commission can come up with
25 suggestions so that the best equipment can be assigned to the task as quickly as possible to protect more
26 homes and more lives.

27 With that, I just want to tell you how grateful I am that Governor Schwarzenegger is looking
28 forward to the report form this commission. He helped participate in the selection of the members of this

1 commission, and he too realizes this was a major disaster which involved at its peak more than 15,600
2 firefighters, 3,600 homes lost, over 20 people killed, cost of at last \$2 billion and rising, and we need to
3 identify what can we learn, what can we do better, what laws need to be changed, what procedures need to
4 be changed, so that if this fire occurs again it can be put out more quickly and with less cost to property and
5 human life. Again, very proud of all of you. Bill, thank you for chairing this, and let me return to you and
6 we can go back to Jim's comments.

7 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you very much, Governor. Uh, Governor, Jim is giving us a
8 rundown and kind of a frightening chronology of just how quickly the fires, and how quickly and
9 frequently they started in this seat. So, Jim, why don't you pick where you left off.

10 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WRIGHT: Thank you.

11 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Okay. Excuse me just a second.

12 GOVERNOR DAVIS: I also want to thank Chief Bowman. This whole commission was really
13 suggested to me by him. And I called Governor-elect Schwarzenegger on that very day to see if he liked
14 the idea. He did. And so I just want to acknowledge the chief's suggestion was a good one, and I know the
15 work product will be valuable to everyone who, uh, everyone in the firefighting community and to the
16 public.

17 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you. Jim, you're back on.

18 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WRIGHT: Okay. Thank you. As I left off, uh, Saturday, October 25, as
19 you can see by your map, we had several fires burning within the state and again emphasizing on the major
20 fires that were established in Southern California. I had previously closed my discussion, discussing aerial
21 firefighting apparatus, or aircraft, and the difficulties ahead in flying in high wind conditions. We'll
22 continue on with Sunday, October 26, the Paradise Fire began near the community of Valley Center in San
23 Diego County. Again, we're seeing fire behavior very extreme with spotting conditions and under Santa
24 Ana wind conditions, they're just spreading rapidly. As we continue, the Otay Mine Fire begins near Otay
25 in lower San Diego County area near the border. We had already initiated requests for the two California
26 mass aircrafts previously. Those aircraft were available and ready to respond, but due to the high winds
27 and smoke obstruction of visibility, they were unable to fly on the fires that were occurring in the Ventura
28 and Los Angeles County areas.

1 Later in the morning of October 26, the Higgins Fire began in Santa Clara. At 11:45 the mountain
2 fire begins in Riverside County near the community of sage, and shortly after 1:00 p.m. the Wellman Fire
3 begins, also in Riverside County, that adds to our fire situation. That afternoon, the Padua Fire was
4 established, and this was basically a western portion of the Grand Prix Fire that had burned into Los
5 Angeles County. Shortly after that a Centerville Fire in Butte County starts. And at 3:36, the Tuck Fire
6 began in the Redwoods National Park in Humboldt County. Now again, as we were drawing resources
7 down from Northern California to augment our forces in the south, again we were concerned with the fir
8 activity and the potential weather conditions that we were facing in Northern California, and we were
9 holding our own with that standing force that we had remained in place, and again through the cooperative
10 efforts of local, state and federal firefighting resources, we had that force in place to respond and deal with
11 these fire situations in Northern California, while we definitely had our hands full in Southern California.

12 On Monday morning, October 27, a little after 2:00 a.m., the Dersch Fire began in Shasta County.
13 At 9:03 the Questa Fire began in San Luis Obispo County. Again, we are still under red flag wind
14 conditions, and with no ease until potentially mid-week. Our federal firefighting cooperators, United States
15 Forest Service, BLM, National Parks Service, were also mobilizing forces from throughout Northern
16 California and also outside of California so respond to the firefighting efforts here in the state. Shortly after
17 2:00 p.m., the West Fire starts in Shasta County. And again we're getting a cluster of fires that are
18 beginning in that northern portion of the state. And I certainly had concerns because through the
19 cooperation of our mutual aid system, again we were really stressing that system to the point where many
20 of us can't remember a time that we've pushed it so far. And again, I stress, this system that we have in
21 California is second to none, and we were truly testing it under these fire situations.

22 At 11:30 p.m. on the 27th, the Whitmore Fire began in Shasta County, east of Redding. This fire
23 quickly burned under wind conditions, and fortunately we had enough resources available to quickly attack
24 that fire and held it at about 1,100 acres. Our fear was this fire getting established and becoming a major
25 fire in northern California, which would have truly pushed our system probably to a breaking point. But
26 again, it was that effort of the cooperativeness of the California Fire Services that pulled together, and we
27 were able to deal with that.

28

1 Early morning, October 28, the Border Fire started, again in southern San Diego County. The Old
2 Fire in San Bernardino was really pushing on the mountain communities where, as we mentioned earlier we
3 had the situation of the bark beetle infestation, were we had hundreds of thousands of acres of dead trees.
4 I'd like to mention that during the first portion of this week of the 20th, the Santa Ana winds definitely
5 caused the fire spread to be rapid. In most cases it was being wind driven, pushing everything to a kind of
6 southwesterly, westerly, direction. For the Old Fire, and the situation there in San Bernardino, the Santa
7 Ana winds that were coming over the San Bernardino mountains basically held that fire along the mountain
8 frontage. Our fear was, because of weather predictions that we were given was that once the Santa Ana's
9 subside and we would then experience an onshore weather, on shore wind, which in essence would push,
10 give wind directions back inland, that that Old Fire would turn and then become a terrain-driven fire with a
11 wind influence that would race up the face and get onto the mountain top communities of Crestline, Lake
12 Arrowhead and Big Bear. That was our biggest fear because we had been fearing that bark beetle
13 infestation and the efforts that many agencies had put forth to deal with that situation and to protect the
14 lives and property of the people that live on the mountaintop communities. We continue with the
15 firefighting efforts. Again, valiant efforts from firefighters, uh, reports that we have heard, things we saw
16 those firefighters do, were tremendous. Air reconnaissance of those areas when we could fly, uh, revealed
17 this unbelievable damage to the natural resources, and in some cases some of the fire areas were burned
18 through so hot they looked like a moonscape. Which ultimately leads to, as we started projecting out to
19 beyond this disaster, of something that some areas experienced just yesterday. Torrential rainfalls, and the
20 effect that would have on barren lands on those hillsides after a devastating fire.

21 The afternoon of October 28, the Wonder Fire, again in Shasta County, started. That fire was
22 quickly developed. Again, under these wind conditions we were still experiencing, we had some fire areas
23 where aircraft could not fly, and I want to cite an example of a situation that occurred that we had federal
24 air tankers, the aircraft commanders of those planes, put themselves on the ground because of cracked
25 windshields in those aircraft, and also a report of a sheet of plywood flying by one of those air tankers.
26 Again, those pilots have a risky job to do, and under those conditions they were really pushing the safety
27 extreme and they put themselves down on the ground. We can't question that. Under those wind
28 conditions they'll fly to the best of their abilities, but when situations that occurring, safety comes first and

1 we cannot compromise that. Because of the continue need for additional resources, we began receiving
2 offers of assistance. And as we continue look at the week out and the weather projections that we had, we
3 began reaching out and taking those offers, and received resource assistance from the state of Nevada, state
4 of Arizona, and also Oregon. And we appreciate their help in sending, because as you know, California has
5 been there for our neighbors in the past. Earlier this season we sent several CDF engines to the state of
6 Montana to help their efforts. So, this was one of those things of the years that we have had times during
7 our fire season to help our neighbors. Our neighbors came to help us this year. And we certainly
8 appreciate those resources and the efforts they helped provide California.

9 On Wednesday, the majority of the fires were ongoing, the northern California fires were being
10 contained, we're still maintaining that standing force to provide that protection on a statewide basis, and we
11 begin mid-week by getting that weather change, where the Santa Ana winds were subsiding and we began
12 to get an on-shore wind effect. This helped him some areas. We uh, we started seeing some change in
13 humidity which helped the firefighting efforts, and the firefighters were able to get a good handle on.
14 During this period, too, mid-week, we were having situations where resources were being demobilized
15 from incidents that were being re-deployed to incidents still in need of resources.

16 I'd like to point out that it was in the noon hour of October 29 when engineer Steve Rucker met his
17 fate on the fire in San Diego County. We continued our firefighting efforts throughout that afternoon,
18 again mobilizing resources. That evening, 10:30, Silverado Fire began near the city of Santa Helena in
19 Napa County, and at 11:08 the Cal Pine Fire started near the community of Geiserville in Sonoma County.
20 We're still having fires in northern California, we still had adequate resources to deal with them, and also
21 deal with our major fire conflagrations in southern California.

22 We continue on, on Thursday, we still had some wind affects in some areas, but those of you that
23 were here, you saw the visibility issues we were dealing with. The smoke conditions that covered southern
24 California during that time. And I had the opportunity to take several flights during this week period and I
25 can say that visibility up in the air was definitely hampered. And that also affected some additional flight
26 time of air tanker and aerial resources that definitely were impaired by this smoke and weather conditions
27 for the visibility.

1 By Friday, we were gaining good ground on the fires. Again, we started seeing a weather influence
2 that came in for the Old Fire we saw in the mountain top, we started getting some fog come in. We had
3 moisture returning, and that definitely helped the efforts of those firefighters. Which I might add, just the
4 day before, we had the opportunity, and Governor Davis accompanied on tour by helicopter over the San
5 Bernardino mountains, and some of the things that we saw was a valiant effort of a great firefighting stand
6 along Highway 18, and to try to prevent that fire from getting into those communities in and around Lake
7 Arrowhead. And one of the things that was most impressive to me, as we flew over that area, we were able
8 to fly both rotary wing and fixed wing aircraft at that time. And if folks could truly see, again, some of
9 these behind the scenes operations that go on, to listen to the air tactical group supervisors choreograph an
10 awesome aerial firefighting attack on this fire that was definitely blowing and going, headed straight into
11 those mountain communities, was an awesome thing to watch and listen to. The radio traffic, you could
12 hear reports of spotting a mile out ahead of the fire front. And to be up high enough to watch the sequence
13 of the air tankers, coming in, making retardant drops and departing the area, another one incoming, and just
14 the sequence of that attack going on, was really something to watch and see. And with the amount of fire
15 that was developing on that mountaintop, actually in two front areas, was really something – again, I stress
16 – really something to see and watch and that was something.

17 November 1, we had another fire begin in Mendocino County and quickly that was held at
18 approximately 30 acres. Again, there was a lot of things happening behind the scenes when coordination of
19 resources, under the MACS system, we went through and evaluated each fire on a twice-daily basis to
20 understand the status, the needs, and the categorizing of the resources needed and needed to be allocated to
21 those incidents. We worked directly with the incident commanders of those fires to determine what was
22 needed and what were their projections on success of those incidents. And, as we got into the first of
23 November period, we were making good progress on those fires and I think we can thank Mother Nature
24 for helping us in that change of wind, also the change in the humidity and some rainfall that eventually
25 came in behind these fires, which helped that effort. But still, it was truly the efforts of those firefighters,
26 all of our firefighters out there, working together, that truly put this fire out. The conditions that those
27 firefighters were working under, something that in my near 30 years experience, were way beyond what I
28 had ever seen before. To look at the amount of injuries sustained to firefighters actually working on the

1 line was just tremendous, you know, there could have been more -- I know that could have been more --
2 with those conditions that they were fighting under. I would like to also add that we termed the Santa Ana
3 wind conditions and those as 30 miles an hour with gusts up to 60, maybe 70, miles an hour. We have had,
4 and I'm sure many of you have seen this, we have had stronger Santa Ana wind conditions, and we truly
5 experienced this go around. They've been stronger winds in the past. We got through this. As we look at
6 the total numbers again, we look at what damage occurred, the injuries that occurred, the deaths that
7 occurred, let's think back and look at what didn't, what properties were saved, what lives were saved, and
8 everything associated with that, and look at the positive of that. Sometimes its easy to grasp that negative
9 that there were homes lost, and that's very unfortunate, but there are a lot of things that I'm encouraged that
10 this commission will be looking at the future as we deal with land use issues, where we allow houses to be
11 built in the wildland urban interface, and its been my experience that folks who choose to live in those
12 wildland areas must know, and must accept, the risks associated of living in that environment. We would
13 like to build the perfect house that would survive a wildland fire in the Santa Ana wind conditions. But in
14 my opinion, that perfect house would be a concrete bunker, and I'm not sure the public is willing to live in
15 a structure of that nature. But they want to live in the wildland. We have to strengthen our forest health, we
16 have to strengthen fuels management across the state to get a handle on this, and to implement regulations
17 and codes for both building and infrastructure to help make California as fire safe as we can make it.

18 Senator Campbell, that concludes my overview of the fire situation starting October 20, proceeding
19 through that week and again, I'd truly like to stress that those valiant firefighters that we have in California
20 took this on, they faced some truly devastating situations, and Mother Nature was working against them
21 there during the first portion of that week. But you know, we came through and they did a tremendous job,
22 and there's no doubt in my mind things could have been a lot worse than they ended up what we suffered.

23 Thank you, Senator Campbell.

24 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you very much. I appreciate your presentation. Dallas, do you want
25 to make some comments at this point, and uh, and then we'll open up for questions and answers from
26 members of the commission.

27 DIRECTOR JONES: Yes, I'd very much like to, Senator. In attempting to keep it brief, I'd like to
28 kinda touch on some of the highlights that I believe are very germane to this fire siege that sometimes kinda

1 fall through the cracks when were going item by item. And one of those is that, in one area of this fire
2 siege, were under an emergency declaration pre-event, and so it's, I think, tremendously due to the efforts
3 of the Office of Emergency Services working with the other state agencies and the local government
4 agencies in the San Bernardino area that we were able to evacuate 40,000 in a very short period of time
5 with no serious injuries. Now that was all put in place from the ground up, working with the communities,
6 working with the people in those communities that if we had a fire in that area that we'd be as ready as
7 possible from that level. But also in that same vein, the Governor signed an executive order increasing
8 staffing on CDF and increasing the number of engines available in the southern part of the state. In
9 addition to that, he also gave our office, for the first time in history, the ability to pre-stage equipment in the
10 event that the fire community felt it necessary to increase staffing in that area. So, I think those are items
11 are not often highlighted, but certainly fed into the ability to respond and the ability to have additional
12 equipment busy, or able to be augmented into these area. The U.S. Forest Service brought in additional
13 heavy-lift helicopters because of that planning. And that we due to the coordination between CDF and
14 OES and U.S. Forest Service that has developed over a period of years. That's normally done pre-event.
15 Those helicopters are very, very expensive. They're very effective tools, but they're very, very expensive
16 on an hourly basis and they brought in additional ones to have those available in this region in the event we
17 would have a fire event. Those are all things that I think leads to the preface of this fire siege. Fires in
18 California are not unusual. We've been through them before. Generally, progress is made after every fire
19 siege, and that's why the entire fire community looks very much forward, I think, to the deliberations of
20 this commission. FIRESCOPE came out of that. ICS in the 60's and 70's. A lot of great things have been
21 developed, and I believe that will be the case out of this commission also. I'd like to also just touch on
22 where we're at in the recovery part of this, because before these fires were out, Governor Davis, in
23 conversations with our office, said you know, we gotta make sure the disaster victims are taken care of.
24 And of course, floods always follow fires. So in conjunction with many of these fire operations that were
25 going, we started these, uh, the move to create these disaster assistance centers to make sure that the people
26 were taken care of. And quite frankly, before the fires were out, we'd had over a \$1.2 million worth of
27 individual assistance checks in the hands of many of these people. Currently we have over \$9,500,000
28 allocated out to these disaster victims, along with about \$21,000,000 worth of **SBA** loan approvals that are

1 out there. Clearly we lost \$40,000,000 in agricultural products alone. Many people don't realize what in
2 the San Diego area, there's many, many farms down there. And there's something like 500 farms that were
3 touched in these fires. The service centers have taken in over \$13,900 applications. For the time in history,
4 we've created a working group of federal, state and local government agencies to work on the potential
5 flood fight that we've already begun, and in one of the counties, I see the supervisors left, has already had
6 tremendous flooding. All that's not necessarily tied to these fires, but certainly a large possibility if we get
7 heavy rains in these areas. And so I think, as far as coordination and being ready for the response, recovery
8 and disaster mitigation measures, you know, we continue to move forward, we look very much forward to
9 the deliberations of the commission and anything we can do in our office to further that discussion, we'd be
10 happy to. Thank you.

11 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Dallas, thank you very much. Ladies and Gentlemen of the commission,
12 now's the time, if you want to ask any questions of either Jim or Dallas, uh, to ask them, and uh, we'll go
13 by raised hands. Who ever raised their hand first, we'll call on. Uh, you don't have to raise your hand,
14 Governor, we're call on you first, anyway. Governor Davis.

15 GOVERNOR DAVIS: Either one of you can respond to this question. Um, when it comes to
16 accessing military equipment to supplement the resources of the local, state and federal firefighters, uh, do
17 either of you have suggestions as to how that can be done in a simpler, more timely fashion?

18 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WRIGHT: The process that stands currently, when we get to a point
19 when we need to access federal resources, federal military resources, is that one, because – it's my
20 understanding – because of an old law in the books, Economic Act, is that it requires that all local
21 contracted resources be exhausted prior to access them. For local and state, if that condition existed, then
22 we would then elevate the request to the U.S. Forest Service, who would then process that through the
23 system to access those military assets, to join in the firefighting activities.

24 GOVERNOR DAVIS: If I understand you correctly, um, the law requires that we exhaust efforts
25 to employ civilian contractors so that their equipment can be added to our arsenal fighting the fire before
26 we obtain access, or before we even ask for permission to obtain access to military equipment.

27 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WRIGHT: That's correct. And that also stands as we access our own
28 California National Guard resources here within the state that we either, that those contracted resources

1 either be already exhausted or they are not readily available for an immediate need where the guard assets
2 could fill in on a rapid basis.

3 GOVERNOR DAVIS: Well, I guess – let me ask the question slightly differently. Um, in your
4 judgment, are there better pieces of equipment, be the helicopters or planes, uh, available to the U.S.
5 military that could be allocated to firefighting purposes that are currently available to local, state and
6 federal firefighters?

7 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WRIGHT: The Type I helicopters that the military would be able to
8 provide us, yes, they would be a tremendous asset once we could access them in a more efficient and quick
9 manner that we could get to. Thos could, once they were properly outfitted with communications and the
10 firefighting accessories that are needed to utilize those properly, yes, they would be a tremendous asset.

11 GOVERNOR DAVIS: Well, one thing I'd like the commission to focus on, and I alluded to this
12 earlier, is to see if there is a way in which there is a military strike force, if you will, trained, equipped and
13 ready in a moment's notice to compliment our firefighting efforts, uh, in California. Now obviously that
14 would get us into the subject of resources and who paid what. But if there is better equipment in the hands
15 of the military, and they can be trained and they can practice here in California, uh, then we know if that
16 asset is needed, it's available, and we can get to it real time.

17 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WRIGHT: Yes, Governor, and also I'd like to share with the commission
18 that we currently have what we feel is a model program in place, the agreement between CDF and the
19 California National Guard and our helicopter utilization program. And what makes that very successful is
20 that it's up front. We train with them on an annual basis, we have outfitted those helicopter units with
21 radios that are capable of communicating on the fire ground situation, and also provided the water dropping
22 buckets that are utilized by those National Guard helicopters. This program goes through, goes through
23 marking of the helicopters. You know, it would be hard to see an **OD green** National Guard helicopter on
24 a fire. They're brightly painted with a number scheme, and this program has been very, very successful.
25 And I think that would be the basis that we could carry over into the true military, the active military
26 resources, as a place to start. We've got a good program with our National Guard assets now, and I think
27 that would be easily transferred over to the full military.

28

1 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Governor, I'm glad you brought that up because the next item on the
2 agenda is our future hearings and those items we'll bring, and one of those on the agenda to which I will
3 refer is looking into the whole issue of our relationship with the uh, with National Defense and the
4 utilization of federal equipment, particularly the defense department in these areas. I do, I must say
5 offhand, though, they change personnel a lot and when you train, you know you might get a group of troops
6 on at Pendleton, have them well trained, and all at once they're shipped out to, uh, they're in Kuwait or
7 Afghanistan, and uh, then we have to train the other personnel on the firefighting techniques, and the
8 communications, one of the other things we're going to look at. There was a question – yes?

9 ASSEMBLYMEMBER KEHOE: Thank you, Senator Campbell. I'll, I'll speak loudly, I guess. I
10 think the people in San Diego have many questions about the fire, and I think there's a lot of shock that a
11 fire could sweep into the city and devastate suburban communities that we don't think of as being in the
12 outlying areas. Certainly in east county the devastation was intense, too, and more widespread, but the
13 folks in and near my district are pretty much city dwellers to some extent, and certainly suburban dwellers,
14 and there is the – what happened that Sunday I think really changed the way people view the threat of fire
15 in the city. As a result, there's many, many questions and media coverage and public discussion about how
16 the fire got so big and why so many homes were destroyed. One thing that came up early on was that some
17 of our firefighters were sent elsewhere in the state and were not available on Sunday. Uh, what did this
18 affect have on the firefighting efforts in San Diego that day?

19 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WRIGHT: Well, as we all have to understand is that, as we saw the
20 progression of the fires, **as with** they were occurring, and obviously the first fire of the siege began in San
21 Diego, in northern San Diego County, which that would have an immediate draw upon those local San
22 Diego County resources. And again, as fire started in San Bernardino, Riverside, again we draw from those
23 regional areas to respond resources. Now, in the fire and rescue mutual aid system, again the regional
24 coordinators and area coordinators, you know, have to look at what's remaining within their region or
25 operational areas to make sure there's an adequate force staying behind to respond and deal with additional
26 emergencies, be it fire, medical aid, or whatever, to have that standing force of a protection level left at
27 home. So, yes, there were San Diego resources responded to North County, also into Riverside and San
28 Bernardino counties. Um, but on the same time, we have resources coming from northern California

1 coming down into southern California to help augment those fires, and also move them into areas where
2 resources have been pulled out. So there's a travel time issue there, and unfortunately, in a multiple fire
3 situation, I think any fire service entity could face this at any time under multiple fire situations, is that that
4 last fire that starts is more than likely going to have a time delay of getting adequate resources there. Now
5 there were resources that responded to the Cedar fire when it began. Uh, there were – the fire began on the
6 Cleveland National Forest, the Cleveland forest had a standing force ready to respond. CDF responded to
7 that fire, as well as the local government, uh, fires. But the concern that that fire go so big so fast is we
8 have to go back and look. That area, and I know from my experience here in southern California, and as
9 you are well aware of, the drought affects that have hit San Diego County's vegetation cover, is
10 tremendous. That dead, standing brush out in the east county areas, and under Santa Ana wind conditions,
11 we could have had 20,000 fire engines there and I think that fire still would have gotten the size it did. And
12 it's unfortunate how it moved into inhabited areas, both in the rural outlining county areas and as it
13 approached the urbanized areas there in the city of San Diego. Again, looking at those forces we were
14 dealing with, the dead fuels, moving into inhabited areas where development has moved in there, and
15 conditions of canyon areas adjacent to those developments, the fuels that have been allowed to surround
16 those communities, like stands of eucalyptus trees, ornamental vegetation that the homeowners allow there,
17 and just combustible materials that are around, the structure, uh, construction type, roof coverings, all those
18 factors take into play, and under Santa Ana wind conditions, you know, the best attempt of the construction
19 that is there now for current standards, you know it's there for basically that average fire situation. And
20 Santa Ana wind conditions can definitely overcome those measures put in place in a given situation like
21 that.

22 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Assemblywoman Kehoe. Senator –

23 ASSEMBLYMEMBER KEHOE: May –

24 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Oh, I'm sorry.

25 ASSEMBLYMEMBER KEHOE: Excuse me, Senator. May –

26 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Go ahead.

27 ASSEMBLYMEMBER KEHOE: May I just go one more?

28 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Sure.

1 ASSEMBLYMEMBER KEHOE: Actually, I have four but I'll cut it short cause I know there's a
2 number of members and I can talk to Mr. Wright at another time, but, one report that people are very angry
3 about is that at the very start of the Cedar fire that two helicopters were available locally, uh, that would
4 have been able to go out there and get it when it was quite small, I think maybe the size of this room. Uh,
5 but the newspaper reported the first helicopter pilot to see the patch of flames that would become the
6 catastrophic Cedar fire radioed for aerial water drops but state firefighters rejected the request because it
7 came minutes after such flights had been grounded for the night. Is that CDF that is in charge of air control
8 there, and why, uh, explain to me how those decisions are made?

9 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WRIGHT: Okay, the situation your describing is that first report of the fire,
10 and as you know, that Cedar fire had a situation around, it was around a lost hiker that was out in the, in a
11 truly a remote wildland area. Uh, there was a search and rescue operation, as I understand, going on, and
12 the first report that came in was from San Diego County Sheriff's helicopter that was assisting in the rescue
13 mission of that lost hiker. Fire was discovered in association with that rescue, for whatever, however
14 reason it started, either as a signal fire type of situation, they're still looking into that. And when that
15 information was relayed into, and that fire began on the Cleveland National Forest, it was reported to the
16 joint command center in Monte Vista, that fire was reported, and it occurred during the time we call cut-off
17 time of our aircraft. And each day, throughout the fire season, there is a projected cut-off time associated
18 with sunrise – uh, start up and cut off – depending upon the sunrise time and the sunset time, the given
19 time. These things are projected based for the flight visibility of the aircraft. That fire, unfortunately, was
20 reported right at, at, or just shortly after that cut-off time, when those aircraft are grounded for that
21 nighttime, uh, early evening situation. Our aircraft did not fly after dark.

22 ASSEMBLYMEMBER KEHOE: And, do you take into account the red flag conditions, I mean,
23 would you consider that maybe conditions are extreme so you could extend that time for a few minutes, or
24 something like that? Or, you say it's relative, somewhat relative, you know, in hindsight, of course, you
25 wish you sent them out. But why, why couldn't there have been more flexibility that night?

26 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WRIGHT: You know, that's one of those things that I think we all have to
27 be open to go back and look at things. Again, flight safety is the utmost importance here. And, again, if we
28 can go back and look, and as the time changes throughout the time each day there's, there's, you know, the

1 light goes away sooner during those early evening hours, and uh, you know, I think we would be open to go
2 look at that for an extension. But it's not to say that we'll have another fire start at 2 minutes after a cut-off
3 time. Uh, it's a threshold that is placed there under aircraft operations, and uh, I think we could go back
4 and look and see, is there a window of flexibility to go there. I think it's worth looking into. But, those
5 times, as they stand today, are based on a sunrise and a sunset with the concerns of pilot visibility and uh,
6 you know, operations and launching an aircraft and then getting that aircraft safely back to its base after a
7 mission. So, we have those situations, both the fixed wing and rotary wing aircraft.

8 ASSEMBLYMEMBER KEHOE: Thank you. Senator, I would like to look at that issue in a little
9 more detail with your help.

10 CHAIR CAMPBELL: We, that's one of those issues we're going to look into also.

11 ASSEMBLYMEMBER KEHOE: Thank you.

12 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Senator Soto.

13 SENATOR SOTO: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Bill. I had some curiosity on the size of
14 the equipment. I was – the Mayor and I watched this, victims were coming into the hangars and wondering
15 what could be done, and just feeling really helpless, and I wonder if we shouldn't, for the future, start to
16 think about – someone said, I think it was the Governor, said that military strike force or bigger equipment,
17 it seemed to me that we, our fire engines that are used very efficiently for domestic type of fires, that they
18 just didn't seem adequate in size to be able to handle the amount of work and stress that there was in
19 fighting the fire. Am I wrong? Does it – it seemed to me that just watching them I got frustrated, and I
20 went to visit the firefighters afterwards when there were 55 engines there, and talked to them about it, and
21 they said, yeah, we wished we would have had some heavier equipment. Now how – would you comment
22 on that?

23 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WRIGHT: I'd like to, and I think my fire service colleagues can also attest
24 to some of the things that we deal with as far as apparatus typing and their capabilities and what have you.
25 Now a lot of the resources that did respond are, I'll try to determine what we consider a Type I fire engine,
26 and basically would be the ones you'd see in a municipal setting.

27 SENATOR SOTO: Right.

28

1 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WRIGHT: Uh, those are, you know, a fairly large size engine, and then we
2 have a, I'll say a medium size of a Type II of a more of a rural application engine, and then a Type III is the
3 wildland engine which predominately CDF operates. Now, you know it's always better to have a bigger
4 gun. I think everybody can attest to that. We'd love to have the bigger gun. But, we also have to realize
5 where these firefighting operations were taking place. Now think about those mountain communities up
6 there, in the Arrowhead area, where those narrow roads that were established back in 1920, you can't get
7 those fire engines down those roads. It's hard to get those Type III wildland engines down the road. Some
8 of the tours that we've taken up there, it's hard to get Sedan down some of those roads. So, you have to
9 have a balance there. You know, obviously you want to carry as much water as you can in a fire engine,
10 you want to carry as much equipment to use in a fire suppression on a fire engine, but ultimately makes
11 them bigger. So, I think the initial thing is, yeah, I want a bigger gun, and they can do more. But, in that
12 wildland application that we're doing, you have a lot of situations where we call hit and run tactics, if you
13 stop at a house, do a quick defense move and move on. And sometimes it's difficult to have that bigger
14 gun trying to do that. So, I understand where those firefighters are coming from, that it's better to have, say
15 that bigger gun. But in some applications it's better to have a smaller apparatus that can get around, more
16 maneuverability and capabilities in those wildland settings. Now that bigger fire engine in the community
17 making a front there in the Del Rosa area? Obviously you want a municipal-type fire engine in those
18 communities. And that's where the strike teams coming from local government can help. And those
19 incident commanders then need to deploy those different types of firefighting apparatus into those areas of
20 the fire that are more of the need of that type of apparatus. So it's just an allocation situation and
21 sometimes you don't have the luxury of doing that and you have to take what apparatus you get and put it
22 to the best use you can, uh, given that situation.

23 SENATOR SOTO: I believe that might be a topic for one of our future meetings, and how can we
24 make the equipment that we have more efficient and try to find – not that they weren't, they were really
25 fighting and working really hard, but I think that if there is a way which we can provide relief with uh,
26 according to the firefighters, bigger and heavier equipment, I think that's a good subject for future
27 discussion.

28 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WRIGHT: Thank you.

1 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Uh, Governor Davis.

2 GOVERNOR DAVIS: Just before we take a break, I wanted to flag an issue that I think would be
3 very helpful to Dennis and Greg and some of the local supervisors, which is land use policy. I was with
4 you, uh, you know, we took the tour over Big Bear and Arrowhead and uh, Lake Gregory, and I remember
5 commenting, there was nobody moving. There was no human life down there, they'd all been evacuated,
6 and also commenting on how narrow the roads are, and obviously that speaks of what kind of equipment
7 you can get up there. But, that community may be unique because the bark beetle infestation and obviously
8 those, uh, trees will go up like Roman candles. That's still a problem. I think at least 85% or 90% of those
9 trees are still there. Is that right, (unintelligible)?

10 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WRIGHT: That's correct.

11 GOVERNOR DAVIS: And they're gonna fuel another fire. Sure as we're sitting here, it's gonna
12 happen. So, hopefully we can get continued help from the federal government to start clearing some of
13 those trees and minimize the fire danger in the future. So not necessarily related to the San Bernardino
14 fires, but in general would you have any advise to local officials on kind of sane land use policies that allow
15 for defensible space so that homes have a chance to survive the kind of devastating fires we saw, because
16 we did see burned areas and we saw homes still surviving. We saw that uh, I was with Dennis earlier at uh,
17 one time -- I was in San Bernardino three or times -- and one time I just went up the street about four or
18 five blocks from our last meeting and I saw several houses burned, but of course there were several houses
19 next to it that didn't burn, and a couple of them had tile roofs, and that made a difference. A couple of
20 them had clear vegetation around their house, uh, so do you have any comments on what a policymaker can
21 do, trying to minimize the possibility of another fire through prospective land use policies?

22 DIRECTOR JONES: Governor, I'll respond first to that. In the emergency management field we
23 call that repetitive loss. It's very common in the flood plane states that you'll have stretches that are
24 flooded out numerous times over a period of years. And I think that's really what we're seeing here in
25 California, is this potential for repetitive loss. If we don't widen some of these streets, if we don't get more
26 defensible space, and in fact, defensible space was originally talked about how to keep the house if it was
27 burning from lighting up the forest, and that's how we got the **30 to 50**. We have to look at that and say,
28 you know, in whole communities what's a defensible space, not just an individual structure. Or we will see

1 the exact thing we've seen in these flood planes this repetitive loss. And to that end, I believe,
2 (unintelligible) got a great deal of backup documentation to help the communities look at some of these
3 areas where they box in the vents on some of the houses to keep the embers from going into the attics. That
4 was a tremendous benefit to the Malibu's, uh, widening of some of the streets. They even put in a pipe into
5 new swimming pools so the pumpers can come up and draft out of these swimming pools because usually
6 in a backyard you can't get to them. So there's many, many things the communities can do, and I think that
7 would be a great charge for the community to try to get the best practices together and distribute those.

8 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Okay. Yes, Mayor?

9 MAYOR MURPHY: As the fires were burning out of control in San Diego, we received calls, the
10 Chief and I, from Arizona and Nevada, offering assistance to San Diego County and the city of San Diego,
11 and there was some confusion about the ability to utilize those resources. Tell us what the relationship is in
12 terms of mutual aid with the state of Arizona and the state of Nevada. I know we have a good mutual aid
13 system in the state of California, but what about our relationship with other states who, in this kind of fire
14 crisis, were willing to help?

15 DIRECTOR JONES: Sure. Uh, when they were originally contacted, we have uh, and we do
16 routine mutual aid with generally Nevada and Oregon, quite frequently Arizona, I think we sent them 20
17 engines last year in the mutual aid system. The confusion actually was on their end. They weren't sure
18 who was gonna pay. And that was the key is, uh, that were able – it wasn't in the resource allocation, or
19 the sending of the resource, it was there was confusion as to what mechanism was going to reimburse for
20 that mutual aid. And uh, there's really a couple of different ways we can do it. We can do it through just
21 direct state-to-state mutual aid, or through the Interagency Fire Center in Boise, and then it gets billed back
22 through the U.S. Forest Service, which as their preference. Uh, they, they, you know, that was the situation
23 there that – we even faxed them a copy of the interstate mutual aid, which has language that they will be
24 reimbursed at their rates, but they chose the other methodology.

25 MAYOR MURPHY: Is there any need for this task force to look at, uh, this commission, to look
26 at enhancing the mutual aid between states? Or do you feel that that's uh, satisfactory?

27 DIRECTOR JONES: No, actually, that's one thing I would like the commission to look at because
28 one of problems we always have in accessing mutual aid is, for an example, Arizona doesn't do strike

1 teams, which is putting five engines together and having them ready to launch when you get the call. They
2 actually call individual fire departments, so there's a time lag, and so I need some work needs to be done on
3 working with the other states on smoothing out the process, and clearly there are some issues on liabilities
4 and things that, uh, unless you're a state like California that uses these things all the time, uh, when it hits
5 ya, it's like, well, wait a minute, uh, are they covered under workman's compensation? And if so, who
6 pays? And to what levels? The compacts provide that, but they were put together back in the 50's and
7 60's, and so a lot of people aren't aware of them. That's what allows quite frankly the law enforcement to
8 chase people over the border is a state-to-state compact for mutual aid. And so, yes, I do believe we need
9 to look at that, and I think some improvements can be made. Clearly.

10 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Mayor Murphy, thank you very much. Uh, ladies and gentlemen, if we
11 could, what I'd like to do is take just about a 10 minute break right now and ask you to come back as
12 quickly as possible, then we'll wrap this up, take any questions, and then – cause one of the things I have
13 here is I have a recommendation for future meetings. I have a recommendation for the issues that we ought
14 to cover, and they will cover mutual aid, they'll cover communications, they'll cover utilization of
15 equipment and all of this range, and then I'll ask you if there are any suggestions you have for additions
16 that we haven't included or haven't recommended, and we will include those for the future meetings. So, if
17 you'll be back here – I have quarter after 3:00, if we can be back here . . .

18 [Tape stops and picks up after break.]

19 CHAIR CAMPBELL: . . . at least one more question. Ms. Delgado, did you have a question of,
20 uh, DEPUTY DIRECTOR WRIGHT?

21 MS. DELGADO: Jim, first I want to personally thank you for all your assistance in helping with
22 tribes through the fire, and I really appreciate that. Uh, when you talked about the bark beetle infestation,
23 and I know that (unintelligible) followed up, saying there were like 85% to 90% of that was still there, was
24 that also the case in northern California, uh, the northern California fires? Do we have to worry about that
25 in the future?

26 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WRIGHT: Uh, no, northern California really did not have an extent of that
27 bark beetle infestation we do in southern California, and that, uh, that infestation has been in southern
28 California back in the 60's. As a matter of fact, there are standing zone infestations (unintelligible) by the

1 Board of Forestry Fire Protection. It's just that that, uh, infestation has been a cyclic issue, it came back, it
2 was in the early 90's that there was a large infestation basically due to drought situations again, but it
3 recovered because of rainfall that it came in. It's because we've had that prolonged drought for several
4 years, which has allowed that bark beetle to get entrenched into that forested areas and affect that forest
5 health in those mountain areas of southern California is why this situation is to the extent it is. We still
6 have standing dead trees in those mountain areas, we're going to have them for a number of years, until we
7 can get in and adequately address the removal of those trees and finding a way to rid those areas of that, uh,
8 of those disposed trees. So, uh, we still have a fuel. We have standing fuel now. When we cut them down,
9 we'll have horizontal fuels to where we need to couple removing the fuels from the mountain areas, get
10 them off to a useful situation there.

11 MS. DELGADO: Do we have problems with some of the fuels in northern California with the
12 standing oaks?

13 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WRIGHT: We have a situation in the north coast area, basically the
14 Monterey area up through lower Mendocino County, sudden oak death, is a disease that affected the oak
15 species of trees that we've been dealing with over the last couple years. And that is, uh, I'll say an
16 equivalent fuel situation as we do have in southern California. But in the far extreme northern portion of
17 the state, we don't have it. Other than a drought-affected chaparral vegetation.

18 MS. DELGADO: Okay, and then one other question, if I may.

19 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Surely.

20 MS. DELGADO: Uh, you talked about the wildland houses and people building the wildland
21 houses. As you know many of the reservations are in those areas, those very rural, remote areas, where
22 they're surrounded with vegetation. And I would like to know if we could possibly address this on how
23 could we, uh, in cooperation with the Department of the Interior (unintelligible), uh, and CDF, how can we
24 work on maybe clearing some of those areas? These are places where people have to live, not where they
25 choose to live, but they have to live there. Um, what can we do so that we don't have the fire damage that
26 we had on some of the reservations, or in those areas, or, prevent future fires so that these are not, these are
27 not the areas where a lot of these fires start.

28

1 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WRIGHT: Good comment and question. I think that is something that
2 definitely can be following up through the Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs. I think I
3 mentioned to you before, uh, several years go I held a position that was a contract with BIA for Indian land
4 fire protection in Riverside County, where in fact part of that position was the institution of a system of fire
5 breaks on the Morango Indian reservation that dealt with fuels management, fire defense system that was
6 put in place funded by BIA. So, I think that is definitely something for Sue with BIA for funding to deal
7 with fuels management on reservation lands.

8 MS. DELGADO: Yeah, I think that's something I'll have to look into because as you know,
9 federal funding for firefighting is very, very minimal, and so, that's one of the areas that we'll have to look
10 at. Because this fuels the entire state, you know, so this is one of the areas that we want to look at.

11 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you. Assemblyman?

12 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yeah, just a couple of quick questions. One, with regard to the land
13 use, uh, planning and so forth, a lot of our cities, especially up around the foothill regions and the county,
14 deal with open space requirements. Uh, in my personal experience in the last few weeks here, I watched
15 the entire preserve area and so forth go up in smoke, as well. Uh, I would like to see us address also
16 management responsibilities a little bit more with regards to some of these open space areas, uh, just like
17 we would if there were homes built there. If were gonna dedicate the open space, then I think we also need
18 to have the ability to defend it as well. And uh, cause otherwise, right now, we've got the entire
19 Cucamonga wilderness area, which is over 13,000 acres, which is not much of a wilderness area anymore.
20 But, uh, anyway I'd like to have that addressed, uh, one more time on land use issues. Also with regards to
21 our mountain regions within the bark beetle, I have some other concerns with regards to, obviously we have
22 some management issues with the forest that would probably need to be addressed more with the U.S.
23 Forestry Department, but I'd like to make sure we do address what kind of future management program
24 we're going to have for our forests, but I've also gotta concern with regards to, one of the firefighters had
25 told me about under storage fire. And, uh, with regards to uh, maybe you can kind of explain what that is.

26 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Is that in the glossary, Jim?

27 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WRIGHT: Probably won't find that in there, but uh, what's being referred
28 to under story fire is basically fuel, an accumulation of fuels that are beneath a forested area, the under

1 story of that. So you have a brush community, uh, grasses, whatever, that have grown accumulated under,
2 you know, tree canopies of such. You get a fire burning in that under story, uh, getting developed, and that
3 can get up into the tree canopies and get into a crown fire. So, again, it all goes back to the forest health
4 issues, the thinning of those fuels that are blended amongst the forested areas to give that. I mean, there's
5 examples out there of good land management in the natural resources where fuel modifications, fuel
6 thinning, has paid off. We've seen that in a number of fires over the past several years is that you have this
7 project where there's been a thinning through a forested area and a fire runs into that, it definitely slows
8 that fire progress down to allow firefighting resources to get in there and make an attack on that fire to
9 ultimately control that fire, through those methods. It all ties into all that fuel management out there that
10 we've been trying to get established statewide.

11 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** One of my concerns with regards to the Lake Arrowhead/Big Bear
12 area, uh, right now of course we've had some recent snow and so forth, it's my understanding that these
13 under storage fuel areas can actually be on fire right now, could actually go through the winter time, and
14 then all of a sudden flare up when the snow melts, and so forth. Uh, do we have any way of determining of
15 those areas exist right now? And we are we gonna be addressing some type of plan to help protect those
16 mountain communities from a potential fire three months from now that's still burning today?

17 **DEPUTY DIRECTOR WRIGHT:** We have to be concerned with that, and I'm sure there are areas
18 in those mountain communities that that definitely exists. Because winter is coming upon us, we can't be
19 lulled into that we have some snow on the ground and what have you. That gives you a level of protection
20 there for a while. My concern is, is that when we get into the new year periods of January and February
21 where we may not have that snow on the ground of mountain communities, its something that we have
22 been dealing with in southern California over the past several years because of climatic changes California
23 has been experiencing. We're trying to deal with an essence of fire season that has become year-round in
24 southern California on an 8-month checkbook. The fuels are of that stress condition, and the fire activities
25 are continuing because those fuels allow that, that we could have a situation that you could have snow on
26 the ground today and three months from now, that same area could be on fire. And with those dead trees
27 that are up there, you get that ground fuel burning, getting into those dead trees, you're gonna have that
28 major catastrophe that we've been dreading for years up there with that. So it is a concern. We shouldn't

1 let our guard down because winter is here. It's gonna give us a little break, those dead trees are still a
2 hazard that we have to deal with for a time until we can get all those out there, or at least abated back to a
3 situation to where we have adequate protection zones for those communities in the mountains.

4 SENATOR SOTO: Excuse me **(unintelligible)**.

5 CHAIR CAMPBELL: There are no dumb questions, now you know that.

6 SENATOR SOTO: It's really a – it's a dumb question, but what about –

7 CHAIR CAMPBELL: We have a lot of dumb answers, but I don't know about dumb questions.

8 [Laughter.]

9 SENATOR SOTO: You're talking about the potential being there, but what if, if the bulldozers
10 and the plows, some deep plows, would take and uncover that and then if there are fires burning down
11 under ground, wouldn't it help to plow them out, and burn them out, and put them out with water, or do
12 something? What could you do?

13 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WRIGHT: Well, I think you may be referring to a deep-seated fire that
14 may have gotten into some of the duff material in the mountain area, and as a matter of fact, a question
15 came up just the other day, uh, well isn't the snow help you. Well, until that moisture from that melting
16 snow gets absorbed into the ground where the ground litter duff that a smoldering fire may be burning into
17 from the results of the old fire, uh, you know, it has to soak in there and cool that material to get that final
18 extinguishment. Uh, we hope that a situation won't develop like that, but the work that those firefighters
19 have done on that fire, you know, hopefully with the containment efforts and the containment is, making
20 sure there is a control line completely around that fire, that we have done those measures through the use of
21 mechanical equipment or hand work to assure that the control line is safe from any, I'll say, underground
22 smoldering fire that could ultimately get out and get on the other side of the line and continue. There may
23 be pockets within the burn area that that's it, but you have that distance from the interior of the fire to the
24 outside unburned area as that protection area that hopefully you won't have that spread.

25 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Okay. And, Senator Soto, you're speech will be to the friends of the earth.
26 [Laughter.] (Unintelligible) in the forest. Thank you all. Uh, if we can, I expect that's the last question.
27 I'd like to adjourn by 4:30 for a couple of very important reasons. One my flight back to Sacramento is at
28 5:50, so . . .

1 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Senator, a couple of quick things I'd like you to consider adding to our
2 list of tasks. Uh, one would be a brief discussion at one of our future meetings of worked well. What went
3 well so that we can all keep doing those sorts of things, uh, because a lot of things did go well. And
4 additionally, something I think we can improve on and I'd like some discussion of it, is re-entry plans.
5 Once we've evacuated areas, which I think we did very well, uh, we weren't as prepared as we would have
6 liked to have been for the re-entry to areas, I'd like that to discuss that a bit. And finally, if you could take
7 a look at the schedule, as I mentioned to you in the break, um –

8 **CHAIR CAMPBELL:** I'm gonna come to that, okay? I'm gonna make the change on that.

9 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** Okay. Thank you.

10 **CHAIR CAMPBELL:** The San Diego hearing will be the one in January, what, 21st. Uh, if we
11 can, uh, members of the commission, what I'd like to do is uh, first of all, Jim and Dallas, thank you very
12 much. It was an outstanding presentation, and I appreciate the time and effort that you put forth and, uh,
13 your staff has put forth in putting this together, cause it really was, uh, I think extremely beneficial to get
14 the timeline for what happened, when it happened and how it happened. Now, uh, I wanna make a couple
15 of uh, before I forget it, uh, Dallas, I want to thank your people at the Office of Emergency Service for
16 putting this meeting together. Particularly Deputy Chief Bob Gerber and uh, Grace Koch, and Denise
17 Banker, and Robert Eplett, and Rob Allingham for their excellent help in arranging this hearing here today.
18 So, thank you all very much for your time and effort.

19 [Applause.]

20 **CHAIR CAMPBELL:** And I'd also like to announce that we've retained the services of Sergeant
21 Major and Associates, Inc. to assist the commission in the review of the October fires, and I'd like to
22 introduce Jerry Haleva, president of the firm, and Blair Springer sitting to my right here, who will serve as
23 the chief consultant to the commission. In addition to that, uh, I think we are prepared to, uh, we're in
24 negotiation with, uh, I think Rand Corporation, among others, to do the drafting of the final report.

25 As I noted earlier, I'd like to schedule at least four or more hearings to cover the issues that I
26 believe should be addressed in more detail. Additionally, I would like to schedule these hearings in or near
27 the localities that were most heavily impacted by these fires. In further addition to those individuals we ask
28 to make presentations, all of the future hearings will be open for public input also.

1 For our next hearing I would like to focus on the following: a discussion of the number and types
2 of various federal, state, local, public, private, and military firefighting resources available to combat
3 wildland fires. A discussion of how the various resources are activated and coordinated in combating
4 wildland fires, and how they compliment one another in terms of firefighting capabilities and uses. A
5 discussion of any jurisdictional, operational or training barriers that prevent the expeditious use and
6 response of any of these resources, especially federal, military and National Guard resources. A discussion
7 of inter and intra state mutual aid agreements, or contract for hire agreements, to obtain resources to combat
8 wildland fires and recommendations to enhance our firefighting capabilities to combat multiple wildland
9 conflagrations.

10 At the next hearing, I would like to focus on the following: a discussion of the challenges in
11 combating wildland urban interface fires. A discussion of the vegetation management, fuel modification,
12 and forest management programs relative to reducing the threat and discussion of wildland fires, including
13 any federal, state, local, political or regulatory barriers to implementing such programs, as well as any
14 citizen or community involvement in such programs. A discussion of building code, planning or land use
15 decisions that contribute to or prevent wildland fire losses. Lessons learned from the devastating Oakland
16 Hills fire of 1991, including whether or not recommendations to prevent, or combat, a similar fire were
17 implemented. And the reason I have that in there, we won't take much time on it, but what it is, I think the
18 closest thing that we have to this is the Oakland Hills fire where we lost all the houses in the East Bay – I
19 think it's officially called the East Bay fire, East Bay hills fire, but I refer it to as the Oakland Hills fire –
20 uh, cause we could learn, what I'd like to see have we learned anything from that and have the
21 recommendations from that been implemented. Uh, I believe the fire connection of the swimming pools,
22 bring the hose, uh, bringing a line out to the street that will fit the hose connection to the fire engine, and
23 they can pump the water out of there, is one of the recommendations that was implemented after that. And
24 recommendations relative to those issues that should be implemented to prevent or combat similar fires in
25 the future. Another hearing, the following hearing, I'd like to focus on the operational issues, including
26 training for federal, state, local, military and private firefighting resources relevant to major wildland fires,
27 and wildland and urban interface fires, command and control of multiple federal, state, local, military and
28 private firefighting resources on multiple large fires, communications inter-operability among federal, state,

1 local, military and private firefighting resources. I held my first hearing on this in the late 1970's, and
2 communication does become a difficult problem, and there are a couple solutions we can spend
3 \$10,000,000 and buy everybody new equipment, but that's not going to happen. But, uh, it's something we
4 have to look into because I think one of the things we have trouble with, we bring in the military and
5 sometimes we can't communicate with them on our wavelengths. Uh, we have the fire prevention and
6 firefighting resources current, new, future including firefighting apparatus, techniques, retardants, fire
7 extinguishing materials and methods in fire prevention technologies and programs, and recommendations
8 to improve and enhance our operational firefighting capabilities.

9 And finally I'd like to conclude with a hearing that ties the previous hearings together and gives the
10 participants opportunity to prioritize their recommendations for the commission's consideration, and it is
11 my intent to provide a blue print for our federal, state, local, governmental leaders to consider and order
12 that we can prevent future fires of this magnitude occurring in California again. As I noted in my opening
13 comments, we have been here before, until we are serious about implementing the recommendations that
14 are necessary to prevent such catastrophes, we will continue to place our firefighters in harm's way and
15 California residents will continue to suffer the pain and loss from wildland fires.

16 I'd like to now open the discussions for commission members to add additional items to the future
17 agendas. I think you all have a copy of the statement. And if you don't want to bring them up now, or if
18 you think of some on the way home, you can fax or e-mail these issues to our consultant, Blair Springer,
19 and I've given his fax number there and his e-mail address. However, at this point, we can discuss any
20 issues you want to consider. And, Dick, we've got yours down. There was a couple of very good
21 recommendations, particularly of what works and what doesn't work. Anybody want to bring up – yes,
22 Andrea?

23 DIRECTOR TUTTLE: May I just bring up one point. Uh, many of you have a copy of the
24 chronology that was uh, that Chief Wright went through today, and I'd like to just caution you that that is
25 still a work in progress, it's not the last word on this event. Uh, during the event, as you know, CDF, forest
26 service, all the agencies, were working very closely together and during the height of the event there were
27 many questions being raised, and regional forester Jeff Blackwell and I, Region 5, U.S. Forest Service,
28 signed an agreement and assigned our staff to do a similar chronology and some additional fact finding on

1 social and cultural issues that were involved in the decision making. So let me just say that that product is
2 still in the works. It will be inter-fingered, inter-leaved with what you have here, so just keep in mind that
3 this is not the last word. Thank you.

4 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Andrea. Uh, any other comments? Uh, Senator Soto.

5 SENATOR SOTO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to offer my office and the capability
6 of initiating legislation, whatever, make them up and whatever we decide to here, offer my office and the
7 staff to be able to draw up legislation to see whatever it is in legislation that we can do to help prevent this,
8 or come up with some final recommendations that we may decide to do. Thank you.

9 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Senator. Uh, anybody else, any comments at this time? Uh,
10 yes, sir. Representing Congressman Jerry Lewis.

11 MR. FREEBAN: Congressman Lewis. Correct. Uh, --

12 CHAIR CAMPBELL: I want to thank Congressman Lewis, particularly for the \$500 million he
13 got in the budget bill. We're greatly appreciative of that. We're greatly appreciative of him for doing that.

14 MR. FREEBAN: Thank you. He wishes he could be here, but he's working on the \$34 billion
15 dollar transportation bill that's being passed now, so. Um, one of the things that we were talking about
16 earlier was the bark beetle issue. It's been a high priority for the congressman, and being able to utilize that
17 material, the dead trees, working with the Department of Energy to provide renewable energy resource, uh,
18 maybe a digester-type facility in the mountains, I could take those trees down and utilize them for clean
19 energy for the mountain communities or for the surrounding areas. That's something I wish we could look
20 at here from the state, local and federal level. Uh, also the importance of communicating not only with the
21 federal firefighting resources, but also with the public. Uh, we have some concerns about, there was a
22 website that was giving up to the minute information that was a private website, and we'd like to explore
23 the option of either beefing up a federal forest service website up to the minute, or state website so that the
24 public can tap into that, and find you know, up to the minute evacuations, fire lines, that kind of
25 information, it's important that they know it as well. Uh, and uh, basically just thank the valiant fight for
26 firefighters for what they did, especially on Route 18, that was absolutely amazing.

27 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Yes, it was. Thank you very much. And I must say, the recommendations
28 may involve federal legislation, state legislation, local legislation, and we have on the commission three

1 state senators and two members of the State Assembly. We have Congressman Lewis and Congresswoman
2 Susan Davis from San Diego, and Diane Feinstein, the senior senator from California, on this commission.
3 So, we anticipate that some of the recommendations we will come up will require legislation of all those at
4 the three various levels. And so we appreciate the members of the, uh, elected members being on the
5 commission.

6 I'd now like to propose our next hearing to be scheduled for Monday, November 24 in San Diego.
7 But I'm changing that from San Diego and I haven't decided where yet, uh, because they have a conference
8 down there on the 21st on this wildland summit, and I think it would be inappropriate for us to hold the
9 meeting at San Diego at that time. And what we'd like to do at all these hearings, we'd like to – if we can –
10 and by the way, let me say this. I want this to be an action-oriented committee. We will try and get as
11 much information as we can. We might not be able to do it in four hearings. We've been given 120 days
12 to come up with the final report, and so we want to adhere to that schedule. But I'd like in all the areas that
13 we visit that we might take an hour, an hour and a half or two hours, to tour some of the damaged areas and
14 get a look at just exactly what we're talking about or hearing about here. So I'd like to say that – oh, yes,
15 sir?

16 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I don't mean to digress, but I would like to propose another potential
17 thing for us to look at.

18 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Okay, go ahead, Ron.

19 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: The word in your last sentence, "damage." The insurance industry in
20 the state of California will be very, very much impacted by the loss that are going to emerge from this, and
21 there are, uh, I'm speaking from a local fire position point of view, there's often sometimes difficulty in
22 getting financial incentives for people to really understand the relationship between fire insurance and the
23 potential for motivating them to be self enforcing, and so forth. Is there any possibility that we could
24 address some of the long-range insurance issues?

25 CHAIR CAMPBELL: I think we can look at that. However, I think there is another commission
26 looking into the insurance areas per se, and I think there was a – Dallas, go ahead.

27 DIRECTOR JONES: Uh, yeah in addition to that, currently as we speak, the insurance
28 commissioner's office is hold town hall sessions, actually ending up this week, I think they started on

1 Monday, in five different locations to receive input from the disaster victims on what kind of coverage and
2 a lot of different things. But I would suggest that we get their information and get it to the commission and
3 then make a decision, do we need to incorporate some of that with it?

4 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE:** I was referring to the ISO, not necessarily the state, but the ISO.

5 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Okay. Let me make this prediction, which I think has a 100% chance of
6 fulfillment. Insurance, fire insurance rates are going to go up. [Laughter.] Oh, well. Let's see, uh, I'd like
7 to, uh, I would also like to propose the following dates for future commission hearings. Tuesday,
8 December 9 or Wednesday, December 10, uh, and I was recommending in the Lake Arrowhead area and
9 again, a brief tour of the damaged areas, but it doesn't have to be up in Lake Arrowhead. I'll let the local
10 people decide if it's better being held on the spot other than Lake, uh, maybe down in San Bernardino, or
11 wherever, I'll let you all, uh, I'll take your advise on that. Uh, the next two hearings should be held in
12 January, uh, and I'm recommending Wednesday, January 7 and Wednesday, January 21, and I'd like one of
13 those hearings to be in Riverside and one to be in Ventura County. The 21st hearing will now be in San
14 Diego at the request of San Diego, and we'll work that around, but I think that, uh, maybe we ought to start
15 in San Bernardino for the November 24 meeting, so, uh, Mayor, is that fine?

16 (Unintelligible)

17 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Okay. We will, we'll get together with the San Bernardino people and you
18 can tell us just exactly where we want to hold it. Uh, we have a large commission, so one of the problems
19 with hold these hearings is, as you can see, we, uh, and not everybody's here today. We have to have, we
20 have 32 members of this commission, so we have to have a place which has sound equipment, has
21 microphones where we have the opportunity to have everybody heard, and a place to make presentations
22 and hopefully, like we have here today, a place in which to do Powerpoint demonstrations, if we need to.
23 So that's, those are the recommendations, and uh – uh, yes?

24 **UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** (Unintelligible)

25 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Okay, the next meeting would be the 24th – what's today, the 13th – so
26 we're talking about 11 days basically.

27 **UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:** And that's in San Diego?

28 CHAIR CAMPBELL: No, that was to be in San Diego, we're moving it to San Bernardino.

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UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: San Bernardino. Okay. Thank you. That's in San Bernardino
[Tape ran out.]