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STATE OF CALIFORNIA

GOVERNOR'S BLUE RIBBON FIRE COMMISSION

BEFORE THE GOVERNOR'S BLUE )  
RIBBON FIRE COMMISSION, )  
 )  
Senator William Campbell, Chair )  
 )

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS  
January 21, 2004  
San Diego, California

CHAIR CAMPBELL: Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. If I could ask you to please stand, we'd like to have the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of this great country. Congresswoman Davis will lead us in the Pledge.

[Pledge of Allegiance is recited.]

[Moment of silence.]

CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you all very much. I'd like to begin this afternoon with self introductions and if we could start, Mr. Springer, if you'd start.

MR. SPRINGER: Blair Springer, counsel to Senator William Campbell.

MR. McORMOND: Ed McORMOND, Office of Emergency Indian Affairs representing Marilyn Delgado.

MR. HILLS: Peter Hills, Fire Chief, County of San Bernardino, representing our Chair of Board of Supervisors.

MR. PITZER: Larry Pitzer, Fire Chief, City of San Bernardino, representing Neil Valles.

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

MR. BAMATTRE: Bill Bamattre, I'm Fire Chief, City of Los Angeles, representing the California Metropolitan (unintelligible).

MR. WILLIAMS: Jerry Williams, Director of Fire Emergency Management for United States Forest Service.

MS. TAHARA: Randy Tahara representing L.A. County Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke.

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

3 MR. BOWMAN: Jeff Bowman, Chief, San Diego Fire Department.

4 MR. MURPHY: Dick Murphy, Mayor of the City of San Diego.

5 MR. COX: Greg -- Rick, I'm sorry. Greg Cox, County of San Diego Board of Supervisors. Thank  
6 you.

7 MS. ALPER: Dede Alpert, State Senator from San Diego County.

8 MS. DAVIS: Susan Davis, Member of Congress of the Third District.

9 MR. HALEVA: Jerry Haleva, Chief of the Chair.

10 MR. GERBER: Robert Gerber, Executive Secretary to the Commission.

11 MR. PETERSON: James Peterson, District Director for U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein.

12 MR. CAINE: Herman Caine, Field Representative for Senator Brulte who regrets he is unable to  
13 attend today.

14 MR. DUTTON: Assembly member Bob Dutton, San Bernardino and Riverside Counties.

15 MR. LASUER: Assemblyman Jay LaSuer from San Diego County, the East County area, 77<sup>th</sup>  
16 District.

17 MR. MARTINEZ: Rick Martinez, Chief Deputy Director of California Office of Homeland  
18 Security.

19 MR. ZAGARIS: Kim Zagaris, Fire Chief, Governor's Office of Emergency Services.

20 MR. PRATHER: Chip Prather, (unintelligible) Orange County Fire, California Emergency  
21 Council.

22 MR. SEDIVÉC: Jeff Sedivec, President of the California State Firefighters Association.

23 MR. WOLF: Bob Wolf, Sixth District Vice President California Professional Firefighters.

24 MR. FREEMAN: Michael Freeman, Fire Chief, Los Angeles County Fire Department  
25 representing FIRESCOPE.

26 MR. COLEMAN: Ron Coleman, Interim Fire Chief of San Rosa, California.

27 MS. MIKELS: Good afternoon. I'm Supervisor Judy Mikels, Ventura County, Fourth District,  
28 Simi Valley and Moorpark.

1 MR. McCAMMON: Bill McCammon, Fire Chief, Alameda County Fire Department, President  
2 California Fire Chiefs Association.

3 MR. VENABLE: I'm Supervisor Jim Venable representing Riverside County Third District.

4 MR. HOOP JOMIE: David Hoop Jomie, Federal Coordinating Officer, Department of Homeland  
5 Security.

6 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you all very much. One of our members, Senator Nell Soto's son  
7 passed away a couple days ago and we'll excuse her and extend to her our deepest sympathy. Ladies and  
8 gentlemen, good afternoon. My name is Bill Campbell. I'm retired from the California State Senate and  
9 I'm honored to serve as Chair of this Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on, on Blue Ribbon Fire  
10 Commission. Welcome to the fourth meeting in a series of hearings being conducted by the Commission to  
11 review the series of destructive fires that devastated Southern California last October and November.

12 As I mentioned at the beginning of our, our process when we had our first hearing in San  
13 Bernardino, the mission of this body is review our response to the disaster and what obstacles may exist to  
14 improving those efforts in the future. We are not here to assess blame, determine fault or to castigate  
15 anyone or any agency involved. California has always enjoyed a brave professional and dedicated fire  
16 service that deserves the full support and attention of elected officials and policy makers. We are here in  
17 support of their services. This public policy imperative is especially true at the local level. Today's  
18 hearing will include an overview of the Cedar Fire and questions that have arisen relating to this  
19 particularly devastating fire. Additionally, we will review the role and availability of military resources for  
20 combatting this type of fire. I have also allowed considerable time for public comments following the  
21 formal presentations. I would encourage members of the public to submit written testimony if possible and  
22 in consideration of their fellow citizens to limit their remarks to no more than five minutes. All submitted  
23 testimony will become part of our official record. Please note that if you have testimony for the  
24 Commission, please see Mr. Springer – Blair, would you raise your hand – at the end of the table.

25 I want to also take this opportunity to thank every one of my fellow Commission members for their  
26 dedication and commitment to attending these meetings, and I personally have never witnessed a greater  
27 commitment of time, energy and resources and focus by such high level group of appointees and I am  
28 personally grateful. While communities throughout Southern California were severely impacted the siege

1 of fires that broke out last fall, perhaps no county was more severely impacted than San Diego. This  
2 county has sustained more fire incidents throughout its history – or excuse me, major fire incidents  
3 throughout its history. I can, I can remember chairing a hearing in San Diego sometime in the mid ‘80’s on  
4 the, on some of the same issues we’ll, which are still confronting us. I believe it is absolutely essential that  
5 the Commission keep in mind their responsibility and obligation of all levels of government to protect its  
6 citizens and support its fire service professionals.

7 At this time, I would like to open this hearing by asking the Mayor of the City of San Diego to say  
8 a few words. Mayor Murphy.

9 MR. MURPHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Oh, excuse me, Mayor, before we go on the, for those of you at the desk, all  
11 the mics are hot. So if you have a side you might want to make be -- remember you may make them to the  
12 whole audience.

13 MR. MURPHY: Yeah, I think that’s ironic that you mentioned that right when I’m speaking.

14 [Laughter.]

15 MR. MURPHY: Mr. Chairman, I’ll be brief. Just, I, just a couple of comments by way of  
16 introduction. The, certainly the San Diego City Fire Chief Jeff Bowman and I welcome all of you to San  
17 Diego today for the Blue Ribbon Committee meeting. The Cedar Fire, which we are going to discuss  
18 today, was the worst fire in San Diego history, 280,000 acres were burned countywide, 10 percent of that  
19 was in the City of San Diego and the eastern part of the City. The city lost more than 400 structures, many  
20 of them completely destroyed. I want to say that under Chief Bowman’s leadership as our Fire Chief he  
21 did a great job battling what was a, a firestorm of epic proportions. While we lost over 400 structures,  
22 thousands were saved, not one life was lost in the City of San Diego. I want to also compliment FEMA  
23 who rushed to our aid, opened a local assistance center in the City of San Diego within 24 hours – 48 hours  
24 of the fire. I don’t know if I should disclose that or not, that’ll be a tough standard for you to meet in other  
25 communities and they’ve been extraordinary helpful to us in, in funding our rebuilding efforts.

26 A couple other things I want to point out. Supervisor Greg Cox, my friend here and I formed a  
27 city/county task force to look at ways that the City of San Diego, the County of San Diego and other  
28 jurisdictions in our community could work better in, in case of a future emergency and we formed this

1 city/county fire prevention task force. We decided to try to keep most of the politicians off of it. We  
2 appointed Chief Bowman as the co-chair and our county sheriff as the other co-chair and we have fire  
3 fighting and law enforcement personnel that are on that task force so they are working diligently in what  
4 we can do locally to improve fire preparedness.

5 Finally, I'd just say the City of San Diego is also proceeding on how we can be better prepared in  
6 the future. We, we have a five point plan that we are implementing that includes such things as toughening  
7 building code standards. I'm not sure where you're all at, but yesterday the City Council finally banned  
8 wood shake shingle roofs in the City of San Diego. We had fire –

9 [Applause.]

10 MR. MURPHY: Interestingly enough if you've been through those hearings we had, it lasted five  
11 hours. We certainly had people in opposition to that. I was particularly pleased that other fire fighting  
12 professionals from around San Diego County came down to testify to encourage us to ban the wood shake  
13 shingle roofs and that they are banned citywide as of yesterday. The, the second point we're pursuing is  
14 strengthening brush management requirements. As you know, San Diego is unique. We have over 200  
15 linear miles of, of urban wild land interface in our city. That comes to the City Council next week. We are  
16 implementing year-round aero fire fighting, working on upgrading fire fighting equipment and increasing  
17 firefighter personnel in the city much in response to the deficiencies we saw in fighting this fire. And we  
18 are counting on this Blue Ribbon Commission, Mr. Chair, to address the issues of Federal, State and Local  
19 interface in order to maximize our fire fighting capability in the future and I appreciate the opportunity to  
20 serve on your Commission and thank you for giving me an opportunity to say a few words.

21 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Mayor, thank you very much. Congresswoman Davis has some opening  
22 comments and, Susan, would you go now.

23 CONGRESSWOMAN DAVIS: Thank you. Thank you, Senator Campbell, and Commission  
24 members, community members and I suspect that there are several of you or a number of you perhaps who  
25 are personally experienced losses during the fire and we certainly express our concerns to all of you.  
26 Thank you for this opportunity to comment briefly about our proceedings as well as to welcome members  
27 of the Commission to San Diego. I also wanted to thank Chief Bowman for his willing availability as the  
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1 Cedar Fire unfolded in responding to the informational needs of elected representatives and I am sure all of  
2 you can understand that there were a number of questions and I, I really appreciate his response in this.

3         The work of a Blue Ribbon Commission seems clear to me. It is to make a top quality analysis of  
4 the issues presented to our State and to our communities by the extraordinary events of the 2003 firestorm  
5 of Southern California. To be sure a Blue Ribbon review and not a white wash. But I think we all know  
6 and, and we're clear and certainly Senator Campbell has reflected on the fact that our goal is not point  
7 fingers here but to point us in the best direction for 21<sup>st</sup> Century fire fighting. I appreciate the effort of  
8 Senator Campbell to focus today's agenda on issues of particular interest to San Diegans. Beginning on  
9 October 27<sup>th</sup> several times I've requested information to help us understand how existing systems worked  
10 among multiple local agencies to broadcast be it the fire alarms, engage fire fighting agencies, request  
11 mutual support and the appropriate sequence of agencies assemble response teams and coordinate fire  
12 fighting in the Cedar Fire. I look forward to the detailed review today of this sequence of events in order to  
13 analyze whether existing procedures and protocols are the most effective in the event of another extreme  
14 fire. Our congressional delegation as you know has been concerned since the outbreak of the fire to get  
15 clarification of the ability to use military resources both of equipment and personnel to buttress civilian  
16 capability in times of unusual fire crises. The Commission has heard conflicting views on this and I know  
17 we'll be reviewing that as well and I look forward to that clarification today.

18         In future meetings I anticipate that the agendas will include additional concerns that I have  
19 expressed about the communication systems among all first responder agencies. The need to access local  
20 knowledge of fuel, terrain and roads and importantly the health and safety protections for our brave fire  
21 fighters. A key issue of training under multiple conditions is basic to such protections. Many challenges  
22 made fighting these fires extremely difficult as we all know such as tracking and anticipating the wind  
23 driven path of the raging inferno. I look forward to hearing from many scientific institutions and  
24 particularly some here in San Diego which showed 21<sup>st</sup> Century technologies that may be able to make  
25 quantum improvements in communications and in the relay of information. We are keenly aware that fires  
26 do not have an eight month season in San Diego County but a year long danger. We appreciate that funds  
27 are needed to continue fire services throughout the winter and we know that Santa Ana winds are just as  
28 likely to occur today in January as in October and that wild land fires occur throughout the year. We are

1 also keenly aware that there is today just as much dense unburned chaparral in our county as we lost in the  
2 Cedar Fire.

3 And finally I think we must all be very clear that fire fighting in the urban areas in the wild lands  
4 and in the interface is also a homeland security issue. Preparedness must envision the ability to respond to  
5 unexpected but massive and even simultaneous events in the future. Thus, the Commission must ask not  
6 only what the practices are and what the capabilities of those protocols in 2003 were, but also what the  
7 technological capabilities in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century should be. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for the  
8 opportunity to make these brief remarks and I certainly look forward to the meeting today. Thank you.

9 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you very much, Congresswoman. Would any other member of the  
10 Commission like to make a statement at this time? One of the things I, I, I want to introduce Jay LaSuer,  
11 Assemblyman Jay LaSuer, we're happy to have him with us. I've invited him to participate today because  
12 much of the fire occurred in his District and so he's on a day us with us – with us today because of that. If  
13 nobody else has a comment, I'd like to turn a couple minutes over to, to Bob Gerber, the Executive  
14 Director of the Commission, to talk about the website that we have in case you're interested in what's  
15 happened, what's already happened in our earlier meetings, what's going to happen. And, Bob, do you  
16 want to explain how they can access the website?

17 MR. GERBER: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Members of the Commission and audience, we  
18 have developed a website for the Blue Ribbon Fire Commission. It is found on the Office of Emergency  
19 Services website. The address is on the top there, [www.oes.ca.gov](http://www.oes.ca.gov), and if you go to the – that's the main  
20 page shown right there. And I have an arrow, it's hard to read, but if you just go down to the Governor's  
21 Blue Ribbon Fire Commission there and if you click on that it'll take you to the next really series of pages  
22 that's dedicated to the Blue Ribbon Fire Commission. We've covered the background of the Commission,  
23 the membership of the Commission. Also we are endeavoring to put the agendas of upcoming meetings  
24 but also we are putting the full agendas with the presenters and their Powerpoint presentations or their  
25 written testimony that's been submitted on the website for you to go to and look at. You'll see here, too,  
26 that we have our next upcoming Commission meeting on February 5<sup>th</sup> at the Marriott Riverside so we, we  
27 are trying to keep ahead of the game and let you know when our upcoming Commission meetings are as  
28 well. And after this meeting what we will do is we'll collect all of the Powerpoint presentations and the

1 information and we'll try to post it on our website so that you can keep up to date with the Commission  
2 proceedings. Thank you.

3 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you very much, Bob. To give you a little bit of my background and  
4 why they asked me to chair this Commission, for 16 years when I was in the legislature I served as  
5 Chairman of the Joint Legislative Committee on Fire Police and Emergency and Disaster Services. So I've  
6 been to a couple of meetings of this type before.

7 We'd like to begin this, the session today and our first presenters will be Director Andrea Tuttle of  
8 the California Department of Forest and Fire Protection. And the, Jim Wright, the Deputy Director of the  
9 Fire Protection for the CDF and Ray Quintanar for the Director of the Fire and Aviation Management for  
10 the USDA Forest Service. And they're sitting there right now. Director Tuttle, would you like to begin?

11 DIRECTOR TUTTLE: Good afternoon, Senator Campbell and Members of the Commission.  
12 Today you will be hearing detailed accounts of the Cedar Fire which was one of 14 concurrent fires during  
13 this October 2003 fire siege. Tragically, the Cedar Fire became the largest single fire in CDF's history  
14 resulting in 16 fatalities, over 32,000 structures lost, and over 270,000 acres burned. Record dry fuels  
15 combined with intense winds funneled flames down drainages in the dark of night catching residents in the  
16 homes. Steve Rucker, a fire fighter from the – a fire fighter engineer from the Novato Fire District, was  
17 tragically lost near Julian. In one 10-hour period, the fire burned 80,000 acres. That is over two acres per  
18 second. There are thousands of stories to tell about these fires. A whole generation of fire fighters has  
19 experienced a career defining event and every resident, elected official, land manager, fire and law  
20 enforcement official, military official and member of the media has learned something from this siege. I  
21 would like to commend you, Chairman Campbell, and all the members of the Commission for your active  
22 commitment to this fact finding task. It is reassuring to see the objective approach that you have brought to  
23 this task. Before Chief Wright and Ray Quintanar and Director Jones provide detailed information, I would  
24 like to set an overview and a perspective. First let me note that this Blue Ribbon Commission is not alone  
25 in its review of the Cedar Fire and the siege as a whole. The fire services worldwide are a very self critical  
26 profession. They have instilled self-evaluation as a built-in element of their business process because they  
27 have to. Their very lives depend on knowing exactly why an incident occurred, what factors influenced it  
28 so that they can save lives and prevent injuries and do better next time. The intensive training that fire



1 fighters received is based on a long history of lessons learned from real time experience. The concept of an  
2 after action report is a longstanding part of this tradition and several are already emerging from this siege.  
3 These will stand with and compliment the Blue Ribbon Commission's report and your recommendations.  
4 At your table, you will find a hot off the press new document. This is entitled The Story. This is one of  
5 the, one of several after action reports. This was commissioned by U.S. Forest Service Region Chief Jack  
6 Blackwell and myself during the heat of the siege because we recognized that it was crucial to capture a  
7 basic chronology of the fire conditions, the suppression response, and the environmental and political  
8 factors that affected decision making during the siege. This report captures the day-to-day conditions of  
9 weather, fire behavior, resource deployment, suppression and evacuation efforts as the siege escalated.  
10 You will note that it is on a day-by-day basis, you can see that the resource commitment is here, a map of  
11 what was going on. Each day tells a bit of the story as the siege develops. Several reports are always –  
12 also coming out from the U.S. Forest Service. The report from the Wild Land Fire Lessons Learned Center  
13 in Morana, Arizona which was made available to your last – which was made available to you at your last  
14 Commission meeting provides and excellent readable and educational examination of the siege as a whole.  
15 Within the next two weeks an extensive San Diego Specific Report will be finalized as a product of the  
16 Cleveland National Forest and the San Diego CDF Unit. The interviews and writing were conducted by  
17 staff by the – from the National Park Service in order to provide an external perspective. This report will  
18 cover the Cedar Fire in great detail with a specific chronology based on dispatch logs and an assessment of  
19 the many local issues which emerged.

20 FIRESCOPE, which is the association of OES in Southern California fire chiefs which was created  
21 after the fire sieges of the 1970's is also in the process of producing an after action analysis from the  
22 perspective of at least nine city counties, state and federal agencies involved in the siege. All counties are  
23 included including San Diego. This will speak to everything from mutual aid, incident management,  
24 training and safety to evacuation communication and staffing.

25 Also the Incident Commend Team leaders from all across the country will be meeting in Southern  
26 California this spring along with the top levels of the five federal fire agencies under the guidance of the  
27 Kennedy School of Government to take a close look at the ICS, the Incident Commend System, response to  
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1 mega fires, those that stress the system to its limits, to see if there are modified command systems that  
2 should be invoked in events of this size. And these fires will be used as a case study.

3 As huge as these fires are to California, I think you are aware that they also fit in to a much larger  
4 national examination by Congress of the wildfire situation throughout the west. Beginning with massive  
5 fires in Montana, Colorado and throughout the west in 1999 and 2000, national attention was brought to the  
6 unnatural condition of many of our overstocked national forests. The exorbitant fire suppression costs of  
7 the last three years have resulted in the raiding of almost all U.S. Forest Service non-fire programs from  
8 states all over the country in order to pay the Federal Fire Suppression Bill for the west. These fire seasons  
9 were instrumental in spurring the creation of the National Fire Plan, the National Wildfire Leadership  
10 Council, the forestry title to the Farm Bill and most recently passage of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act.  
11 A major focus of Congress and OMB continues to be on cost containment. Fire suppression resources most  
12 notably aviation retardant, engines and crews in the instant cities needed to fight – to support the fire  
13 suppression forces and the teams of fire managers are very expensive. As much as we all want to have  
14 more of all resources during peak events, Congress is also forcing us to be responsible in utilizing these  
15 resources most efficiently.

16 In addition to the many recommendations which will emerge from this Commission, there are four  
17 areas where I personally hope for attention and recommendations. I know that Congress member Davis,  
18 Member LaSuer, Supervisor Jacobs and many others of you have very much the same concerns. The first  
19 issue is the resolution on the use of military resources or not. During the heat of a fire siege, it is not the  
20 time to demand that fire agencies break their statutory congressional mandates or amend federal contracting  
21 procedures. We need a clear debate now at the federal level as to whether military fire fighting resources  
22 will be trained, staffed, equipped and nomex ready during fire season or not. This applies to aviation  
23 resources, the mass helicopters and their pilots and to marine battalions, heavy equipment and other  
24 personnel. Will compatible avionics and communications be installed? Will fire trained pilots be  
25 available? Will mare battalions require diversion of limited state fire captains or federal crew leaders for  
26 their supervision? An amendment to the Economy Act may be one step, but it is not the only policy  
27 decision needed. We may need to accept that the answer from the military is no for very valid reasons  
28 related to their primary mission or it may be yes under specified conditions. We need to resolve this issue

1 but it is unfair to expect fire managers to resolve these issues and fight that same policy battle again next  
2 time during the heat of battle when their real job is to focus on the fire.

3         Secondly, we need better public understanding of the appropriate use of aviation resources during  
4 wildfires. There was tremendous second guessing and finger pointing over the use of aviation resources  
5 during this siege. There is an understandable but a misguided public assumption that the fire is not being  
6 fought unless planes are in the air. Fixed and rotary ring aircraft are an important fire fighting tool to slow  
7 the spread of fire, but they are only one of many tools. During wind conditions over 34 miles an hour, it is  
8 both hazardous and wasteful to make retardant drops that blow away in the wind. Unfortunately, due to  
9 public pressure, some examples can be cited where cosmetic but expensive and ineffective flights were  
10 made. Following several tragic plane crashes in the last three years, the Federal Fire Agencies  
11 commissioned a national Blue Ribbon Aviation Commission and have undergone intensive analysis on  
12 their aging air fleet. They are now proposing plans for restructuring the national fleet with a variety of  
13 different aircraft and in fact are proposing to test both a 747 and a DC10 as a “super heavy air tanker” in  
14 the next two years. CDF has engaged in conversation with San Diego over the need for an additional  
15 helicopter to be stationed here. For the past two years, executive order signed by Governor Davis provided  
16 augmentation funds for a special San Diego helicopter and crew, but a more permanent solution is needed.  
17 We remain committed to work with the various San Diego officials to see what makes the most sense. We  
18 have our CDF Chief of Aviation, Mike Padilla, here to answer your specific questions you may have. He  
19 has recently had very productive meetings recently regarding the Navy Reserve helicopter resources and  
20 we look forward to training and better integration of these with San Diego’s resources.

21         Third, we needed better understanding of the need to adhere to safety standards and procedures.  
22 We are asking fire fighters to race into areas where others are fleeing. From the day they begin, fire  
23 fighters are trained and as equipped as best we can to protect their safety. Like all fire agencies, CDF has  
24 comprehensive handbooks of required standards and procedures. Every rule in the rule book is not there  
25 just as some bureaucrat’s bright idea. Every one is there as the result of an injury, a fatality, or a near miss.  
26 We will not ask our dispatchers, fire fighters, captain, crew leaders or anyone on the fire line to violate their  
27 safety standards. With respect to dispatching aircraft before sunset on the Cedar Fire, Chief Wright, the  
28 Forest Service and the San Diego Sheriff’s office recognized that we need to examine our different policies

1 for cutoff times for dispatch so that we have a common understanding of each other's procedures and  
2 looked for coordination and harmonization where appropriate.

3 Fourth, we need improved public information centers and we need to provide productive roles for  
4 elected officials. In mega emergencies, everyone needs accurate and timely information for the safety of  
5 themselves and their loved ones, and for coordination of emergency response. The national and  
6 international news media also demand coverage and through their own reporters and aerial resources they  
7 can often provide important information that helps the fire managers. For various reasons, San Diego did  
8 not have a joint information center as well developed as did San Bernardino, but I strongly recommend the  
9 checks be considered as a model to coordinate the disbursement of accurate public information. Local elected  
10 officials can also field very – can also fill very needed roles for getting information out to your constituents.  
11 You are needed for public service announcements, for helping at evacuation centers, for helping to smooth  
12 local procedures and assist with facilities. You are needed in planning before disasters as well as during  
13 them. Your job is to represent your constituents and to help facilitate the emergency response. I have been  
14 encouraging all of the PIO functions within the ICS system to work on improving their ability to involve  
15 elected officials in needed roles during the event so that you can be seen by your constituents as helping  
16 positively in the response effort.

17 Let me also comment on one very disturbing element of the San Diego fire fight because  
18 unfortunately it needs to be said. There was something that we were not prepared for during this fire siege  
19 and of all the counties affected, this was unique to San Diego. During the height of the fire fight, we  
20 encountered incessant finger pointing and second guessing by a relentless media and a few public officials  
21 who blamed the fire service for much of the loss. This stinging criticism during the heat of the battle  
22 severely demoralized the fire fighters and distracted the fire managers who had to divert their attention  
23 away from their primary jobs in order to deal with the media and the barrage of inaccurate accusations. I  
24 speak for CDF fire fighters who, as you know, were brought from every unit in the state to fight these fires.  
25 They used every ounce of their professionalism and training to respond as best as conditions allowed.  
26 Unfortunately, and I regret to say this, but they have also come away from San Diego with some bad  
27 memories and bad tastes. Much of Chief Wright's and my efforts after these fires has been to help rebuild  
28 morale. I would hope that everyone can learn from this experience and wait until the flames have cooled

1 next time before finding fault. It does not serve the public well if the press and elected officials are  
2 providing information based on rumor. It confuses the public and detracts from the fire fighting effort.

3 So let me conclude. Unfortunately the siege we experienced this October is not a one time event.  
4 As we continue to build cities and subdivisions on top of echo systems that are built to burn, we will  
5 continue to have tragedies from wildfires. Over 90 percent of these fires burned in chaparral and coastal  
6 sage where fire is part of the natural system. High intensity fires occur every 20 to 50 years in chaparral,  
7 but it regrows quickly and is ready to burn as intensely again after even seven to eight years. Our challenge  
8 is to live and build our communities in a more fire safe manner, reduce the unnatural fuel levels in our wild  
9 lands, improve our evacuation plans and communication systems. We still need better preplanning and  
10 training across the 65 plus local fire and public safety agencies in San Diego. I suggest looking at the  
11 success of the mass effort in San Bernardino as a model. CDF and the Forest Service are constantly  
12 engaged in efforts to improve our coordination, command systems and equipment. We in the public sector  
13 need to and we will do our part. We also need to ask residents living in the wild lands to do theirs. I hope  
14 to assure you that we at CDF continually strive to improve ourselves and our systems. In summary, I want  
15 to thank the work of the fire fighters and the law enforcement officials who came to the assistance of  
16 Southern California. Their courage, training and professionalism lead to extraordinary saves of lives and  
17 property. We need to recognize the many decades of experience we have in fighting wild land fires and the  
18 extensive fire management system that worked well in the face of the intensity of fire that nature through at  
19 us. We will take the lessons learned here and continue to make improvements for these mega scale events.  
20 He losses were tragic, but I am confident the spirit of recovery will heal us and take us all forward.

21 Thank you all again for your service on this Commission.

22 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Andrea. Are there any questions at this time? Okay. Chief  
23 Wright.

24 CHIEF WRIGHT: Good afternoon, Senator Campbell and distinguished members of the Fire  
25 Commission. What I'd like to do this afternoon is provide a review of conditions and events that were  
26 occurring throughout the state prior to the start of the Cedar Fire. You may remember that this fire siege in  
27 Southern California started on Tuesday, October 21<sup>st</sup> in the noon hour on Camp Pendleton in Northern San  
28 Diego County. During the period of October 21<sup>st</sup> through the 25<sup>th</sup>, there were eight major fires already

1 burning in Southern California and two fires burning in Northern California. The conditions that existed:  
2 In Southern California we were experiencing Santa Ana winds –

3 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Chief, excuse me just a moment, but ladies and gentlemen, there's a  
4 Powerpoint presentation what, what's going on. You may have to turn a little and probably see your  
5 chiropractors tomorrow. But I want to make one other offer. There are some chairs up here in the front  
6 and for those of you who are standing back there would like to prefer a seat in the front row here there are  
7 about seven or eight chairs so feel free to come up and take those. Excuse me, Chief. Go ahead.

8 CHIEF WRIGHT: Okay. As I was saying, we were experiencing Santa Ana wind conditions 20-  
9 30 miles an hour with gusts of up over 45 miles per hour throughout most of the areas along with low  
10 humidities and above normal temperatures. And these conditions were expected to last a full week during  
11 this period. And again I'd like to stress upon all of you and from our previous testimonies that Northern  
12 California was also in severe fire weather conditions as well as we were dealing with fires throughout the  
13 state. The fuel conditions here in Southern California. As we mentioned in previous testimonies long term  
14 drought just, just further worsened the, the high fire danger potential. Widespread brush and timber  
15 mortality exists. Widespread critical dry live fuels and also record low dead fuel moistures. In particular  
16 here in San Diego County much of the area that surrounded the Cedar Fire area had not been – had not  
17 burned in 30 years. We had extreme amount of fuels. Other fire situations that were happening throughout  
18 Southern California and some of the circumstances and activities happening. The Verdale fire, to give an  
19 example of the fire behavior that we were experiencing here was reporting spot fires up to half to one mile  
20 ahead of the main fire and consuming record number of acres burned per hour. Thousands of people were  
21 being evacuated on the Verdale, Old and Grand Prix fires that were occurring during this period. And  
22 because of wind conditions, and we had touched on this before, the utilization of, of aerial fire fighting  
23 resources, were grounded due to high wind conditions. CDF's response to the ever growing demand on  
24 resources here placed into effect early on special staffing patterns and conducted activities to bring back  
25 resources, cancelled days off for all fire fighting personnel. Here in San Diego County we acquired a call  
26 when needed helicopter to also assist our fire fighting efforts here. All of our fire crews were staffed  
27 statewide 24 hours a day. All fire engine resources within the CDF inventory were activated including our  
28 academy training fleet that which we mobilized and responded to fires along with camp and reserve

1 engines throughout our fleet. We had authorized Los Angeles County to activate strike teams and place  
2 them in the Santa Clarita Valley area. Ventura County also had special staffing patterns. And we had also  
3 worked with the California National Guard and mobilization of, of eight helicopters and we had committed  
4 and placed on standby several CDF command teams. In addition to CDF's special staffing pattern, the  
5 United State Forest Service also had various fire fighting resources placed on special staffing and  
6 mobilization and included additional air tankers, smoke jumpers believe it or not being used in Southern  
7 California, Type I helicopters, the heavy, heavy lift helicopter types, multiple hand crews and additional  
8 fire engine resources, water tenders and additional heavy fire equipment. And also they, they also  
9 mobilized and prepositioned command teams to deal with major fire activities. During this same time, this  
10 period, there had been other mobilization and responses of other fire fighting resources. The Office of  
11 Emergency Services had mobilized 75 of their fire engines and also mobilized two of their water tenders in  
12 their fleet. At this, at this point in time there were over 350 local government fire engines committed to the  
13 fire fight in Southern California.

14 This brings up to Saturday of October 25<sup>th</sup> and I'll pass off now to Chief Ray Quintanar who will  
15 begin the briefing on the Cedar Fire here in San Diego County. Chief Quintanar.

16 CHIEF QUINTANAR: Thank you, Chief Wright. Mr. Chair, Members of the Commission, thank  
17 you. First before I begin I would like to submit for the record a Fuels Treatment Effect and Review that  
18 was done by our Washington office covering the Cleveland National Forest, San Bernardino, actually fuels  
19 treatment even in severe conditions can slow down fire, can actually stop it, gives anchor points. And with  
20 your permission, Mr. Chair, I'd like to submit that.

21 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you very much. It'll be part of our official record.

22 CHIEF QUINTANAR: Secondly, I would like to recognize our regional aviation officer who is in  
23 the audience, Dennis Holbert (phonetic). If we have aviation issues that we can also address through,  
24 Dennis would be more than willing to do that. Then I'd also like to recognize Supervisor Ann Fagy  
25 (phonetic) from the Cleveland National Forest who is in our audience as well as Chief Rich Hawkins who  
26 will assist me with the pointer behind me as I talk. And Rich Hawkins has been kind enough to bring  
27 maps, progression maps. Later on, if we want to get into detail or people have any questions after the, after  
28 the presentations are over, we'd be more than happy to make that happen.

1 The Cedar Fire. It's 1735 on Saturday and Monte Vista Emergency Command receives a 911 call.  
2 1735 at this time the call is there's a fire and it's in a bad area. There are numerous resources, dispatched  
3 to that fire and I'm not going to read off what those are; I think you can see what that is. But initially  
4 approximately over 320 personnel from federal, state and local agencies are responding to this fire.

5 We go to the next, next slide is you'll see, I wanted to show this because it shows terrain and  
6 topography. This area was very, very inaccessible and brush was 10-20 feet tall, could – the fire could not  
7 be seen. Understand it's 1735 hours, it was pitch black outside on that day. The fuel types in which it was  
8 burning was coastal sage shrub, chaparral, oak woodland, oak forest, and again a lot of the chaparral was  
9 dead, over half the chaparral throughout this area is, is dead because of the drought.

10 What I want to do is go to the next slide briefly and then I'm gonna go to the next one and come  
11 back to this, this one, the topography map. This shows, for those who aren't familiar with topography  
12 maps relief, and I want to go to the next slide and then I want to come back to this one. You with me,  
13 Dorothy? Okay. On a – this is an extremely important point. Fire fighter safety is paramount in our  
14 critical stages and at all times is we try to assess where the fire is, how do we get into it and how do we get  
15 out of it. So if we can go back to the previous slide. What I'm gonna do is talk through a little bit of what  
16 was actually happening at this time is we were trying to assess how do we get into this fire and why it took  
17 so much time to do this. And if you look at the, if you look at this slide you'll see that there are three roads  
18 in essence where this fire began. The fire began, you'll see the little red dot that shows in a rather  
19 inaccessible area. Now, there are two of these roads getting to this fire which you would have had to have  
20 walked downhill to the fire. One of these roads we would have had to have walk uphill to the fire. Now,  
21 what was known at the time is that we were expecting east winds. There were a couple of ridges and a  
22 valley to get to this fire and we didn't know where it was. Now we have very well defined protocols that  
23 we use when we're going downhill to a fire: number one, we're gonna have communications with the  
24 crews. Number two, we're gonna have visibility to the crews or we're gonna have direct communications  
25 with the crews so that we know where they are at all times. Number three, we're gonna have escape routes.  
26 Number four, we're gonna have safety zones for these crews so we'll know where the fire is and should  
27 these crews have to get out that that will happen. Understand that moving to the two roads where we would  
28 have had to gone down hill we didn't know what this fire was doing nor could it truly be seen. Now in



1 three or four areas where between the Forest Service and CDF there was extensive scouting and at 2030  
2 Battalion 33 was driving on the Cedar Road trying to figure out how do we get into this fire. At the same  
3 time, going downhill to, to this fire again became a real problem and what was decided is we weren't gonna  
4 put anybody in there until we could figure out how to get into this fire. If you look at where CDF Battalion  
5 Chief on the – would be your right side, I believe looking at this – there was a local neighbor who said I  
6 know how to get into this thing and there was still a mile and a half walk into this fire. So it wasn't gonna  
7 happen. And actually within 90 minutes after they had gone in here and looked and sized this up, this  
8 whole area burnt up. And that means that had we put our personnel in there, they wouldn't have been  
9 coming out. And so the decision in spite of the time that it took to put, to find this fire and see what we  
10 could do it was a – the right decision. Quite often when we can't find the fires, we don't know where they  
11 are, what we do is we will wait for the fire to come out and the, that initial determination was made and the  
12 fire at 2250 spread to the north and crossed the Eagle Peak Road and a dozer was requested. Now this was  
13 the road where C&F Engine 33 and Battalion 33 had moved to that side of the road to say here's where  
14 we're gonna try and take this fire. I hope you're with me, Rich. Because the fire – the wind on this fire  
15 was moving from east to – from east to west or east to northwest, so you can see it was moving from right  
16 to left and those drainages in there – what happens at night was we get downslope winds, it's typical  
17 downslope winds which are surface winds. These, these winds are extremely powerful effective winds.  
18 Daytime winds are upslope, they're usually 20 feet above, above the ground. Didn't know that, but they  
19 are very, very effective. So we had east downslope winds at night and chaparral, it was, half of it was dead.  
20 So putting the crews in there, discussion was why didn't you do something sooner? The effort to do  
21 something sooner was monumental but it was decided let's let this thing come out and see where it really  
22 is. To give you an idea of how difficult it was do assess, this fire moved north. It went up to Eagle Peak  
23 Road and then it turned around and it went west. And the area to the right or east of that fire and that whole  
24 area within an hour and a half after these crews had been trying to move in and out of that area, that fire  
25 had burnt over that entire area. So we had no escape routes, not way to put people in and we knew we were  
26 going to have a problem.

27           Moving to the next slide at 2250 hours the fire had spread to the north and crossed Eagle Peak and  
28 as I said dozers were requested. At the same time, the fire had spread 1.6 miles westerly to San Diego

1 River and that would be due to the Santa Ana winds. Once it came out of the brush and once it was picked  
2 up by the, by the winds it was off and running. At this time, resources were moved to San Diego Country  
3 Estates population of , I don't know what the population is, I guess somewhere in the 10,000 plus, knowing  
4 that the best we were going to be able to do on this thing was to try and protect the public and try and  
5 protect the, the housing. Now surface Santa Ana's started – surfacing Santa Ana started to come up and  
6 they started to, they were dominant and throughout the rest of the fire behavior for the rest of the night and  
7 at 2240 hours trying to flight this wasn't gonna happen. Typically what we try to do is an anchor point  
8 that's where we start from, and then we'll move around the flanks of the fire and try and corral this fire and  
9 try and bring it in. We had enough people on scene at the time probably for a 1,000 acre fire and at this  
10 point it was realized that other person getting to this fire and trying to size up where it was was difficult.  
11 We didn't know where this fire was and we didn't have some kind of mechanism that could be telling us  
12 where the fire was that we could tell that to our fire fighters.

13 Moving to the next slide, the potential rate of spread. This is extremely important as well. We  
14 underestimated the rate of spread of this fire. Over the past years usually the winds will pick up, they'll die  
15 down and we're able to pick up the fires from that even though they become much bigger fires. This fire  
16 kept moving. It did not stop and it accelerated in its rate of spread and it was a surprise to people who'd  
17 been in that area for 30 some years plus. And the fire had a major run of 30 miles in 16.5 hours. Those of  
18 you who were there if you can imagine what 5,000 an hour looks like when it's burning. At this point in  
19 time, it was a matter of moving people, informing people of what was happening. As a matter of fact, it  
20 was even to the point where the fire fighters themselves, their lives were in jeopardy in trying to do what  
21 they were going to do.

22 At 2356 hours, the fire had moved off the national – the Cleveland National Forest into state  
23 jurisdiction. And we usually go into unified command as we move from one jurisdiction to the next so the  
24 state had the, had the fire and we were in unified command in support of and it's a team effort all the way  
25 across.

26 Now, the next slide at 0300 hours the incident on the 26<sup>th</sup> was reporting winds, east winds of 30-45  
27 miles an hour with gusts to 75 miles an hour. And relative humidities were down to 10 percent. That  
28 means if you were to go outside at night and see what your lawn looks like, it would be very dry. There

1 would be no dew on the greens at the golf course which could be an advantage to some. It is believed that  
2 a majority of the civilian fatalities occurred between 0300 and 0700 hours on this incident. And at this time  
3 if you can imagine, and I think those of you don't have to imagine, some of you it was a matter of what are  
4 we gonna do and how are we gonna go from here? Because this fire had taken off and made it's major run.

5 On Monday the 27<sup>th</sup> the extreme fire behavior was such that flames over 200 feet in length were  
6 seen. That's looking straight up 200 feet if you can imagine what that would look like and how, how, how  
7 the response would be when people are told you only have 20 minutes to get out of your house. Fire  
8 generated thermal convections; in essence there were actually whirlwinds going against the winds and  
9 going in toward the wind as opposed to away from the winds. And the fire was moving in multiple  
10 directions. Understand fire doesn't move in one major front across some area; there are multiple heads to  
11 fires. We didn't know where all the heads of these fires were. We knew roughly where the major front of  
12 this fire was, but all the stuff that was happening in the middle of that and the middle of the flanks we threw  
13 all our fire personnel in there and said you gotta go protect homes and you've gotta get people out.

14 On the 28<sup>th</sup> there was a transitional winds with stronger winds. That means that the winds were  
15 starting to go back to a typical west/southwest wind and the burned even in that situation an additional  
16 114,000 acres. Suffice to say that we'd put in additional incident management teams and fire personnel  
17 were, were pouring in. Now when this fire took off initially there were also these other fires from Ventura  
18 County down to San Bernardino County, Riverside, et cetera. The question is asked why couldn't we get  
19 resources there sooner? Resources were ordered and we were looking at our, at our logs of how soon we  
20 were getting resources there. Oh, yes, immediately had responded with some strike teams that made a  
21 significant difference on the, on the, on the next morning there's a fire taking off with 12 strike teams of  
22 engines. But anything else that was coming out it was already committed so we had to go further and  
23 further away. We went out of the state, we went to other states to get more resources because of the  
24 commitment of other resources. Now the Roblar 2 Fire which had taken off prior to that had been picked  
25 up and that was off of Camp Pendleton. The resources from that were put back onto the Cleveland  
26 National Forest and they had most of their resources, because even though the fire was in the shaky  
27 containment, release of resources were put immediately onto the Cedar Fire and that, that helped  
28 somewhat. But again, what happened is we truly underestimated what this fire and the other fires were

1 gonna do. We never been in this situation – we either have, have never been in this situation and so when  
2 this thing finally was taking off, it was a matter of a do what we can to protect human life as well as  
3 property.

4 I want to go to the next slide and on Wednesday, October 29<sup>th</sup> that there was continued 200 foot  
5 flame lengths and that's the day unfortunately Engineer Steven Rucker was killed in the line of duty and  
6 three crew members were overrun by fire. At 6:00 that evening, humidity was back up to 80 percent and  
7 on October 30<sup>th</sup> to October 4<sup>th</sup> [sic] it looked like we were gonna get some rain and, and we finally did.

8 Now during the entire, as this was happening, the reports that kept coming up, I've tried to  
9 summarize a bit of, of what was happening. We had fragmented command. Not everyone has a high  
10 occurrence of a large fire frequency and as more fire departments jumped in, we had a fragmented situation  
11 with the Incident Management Teams trying to manage this huge scale of information transfer and who's  
12 supposed to be where. Law enforcement, Caltrans were put into situations with no training and no  
13 protective fire fighter protective equipment. We didn't have the technology at the time to have eyes in the  
14 sky so that we could have download capability to give those fire personnel and decision makers and  
15 opportunity to, to find out what – where the rest of this fire was gonna go. That would not have changed  
16 this rate of spread of this fire and probably would not have changed a lot of the outcome, but at least it  
17 would have given us a better assessment or better deployed personnel and equipment and we didn't have  
18 that, at least the first night, couple of nights that wasn't happening.

19 The public didn't know what to do. How often have any of us said we're gonna train today to  
20 evacuate our house in case there's a fire. I'd say for the most part never. And, and where do we go and  
21 what do we do? Finding homes was difficult because of access to the roads, lack of addresses, stuff that  
22 was covered over. Fire departments drove right by roads not realizing there was a home back there. And  
23 the open space is kind of interesting, but the assessment, part of the assessment we did, the open space  
24 actually contributes to urban interface loss from fires because fire will run through the shrubs et cetera and  
25 then it moves into homes and so it becomes almost a no win situation.

26 The fire was the biggest in the history that we've had. The Laguna fire which occurred there in  
27 1970 was 170,000 acres. That fire was consuming about half the number of acres per hour as this fire was  
28

1 consuming. And as I said we have never experienced the extreme conditions, at least on record, that  
2 occurred during this time period.

3 CHIEF WRIGHT: During the period, during the period of the Cedar Fire, there were additional  
4 fires also occurring in San Diego and also nearby counties. And in addition as you may recall Northern  
5 California, still under critical burning conditions, had five additional fires that we were dealing with. The  
6 point here was that as we, we pushed and truly tested the California fire protection system under fire  
7 conditions, we still had to balance an adequate standing force of fire protection resources statewide to  
8 provide that adequate level of fire suppression capability statewide to prevent further disasters. And even  
9 though our system was stressed, and I had mentioned to you in previous testimonies, it didn't break. We're  
10 very proud here in California to have such a wonderful fire protection integrated cooperative fire protection  
11 program and –

12 [End of Tape 1, Side A – Beginning of Tape 1, Side B)

13 CHIEF WRIGHT: As we continue to review the fires improvements will come along as they have  
14 done in previous reports. We spent several weeks looking at old reports as, as the, the Commission will be  
15 also looking at various reports from the past, looking at recommendations that have come out of those  
16 reports, and following up to see what was implemented and what hasn't. But it's very interesting to see the  
17 very common theme that goes all through these fires, the big events that have been reviewed is that these  
18 extreme mega fires have occurred under Santa Ana wind conditions. And under those, the best of fire  
19 fighting capability, air craft, everything, the limitations come out during those conditions. It had been on  
20 10 year cycles typically and, you know, we'll continue to learn from these and, and, and implement those  
21 things that we can to lessen future fires of this nature. But we have a big job ahead of us.

22 One of the other slides and we'll also provide you a recap of what our state and federal aviation  
23 resources were committed to the incidents. And there's been a lot of question of why, why more wasn't  
24 used, why they weren't used in different times and we've explained all of that is that during those high  
25 wind conditions they're ineffective and, you know, create a flight safety risk to, you know, not only the  
26 pilots but our fire fighters on the ground and also the public.

27 As we move now into discussions on recommendations of why might help for the future, what the  
28 Commission will be looking for, taking suggestions and moving forward in your report is that we would

1 like to provide you these recommendations, and we've touched on some in previous testimonies, is one is  
2 that we have to have an awareness and distribution of public funds to include delivery of adequate fire  
3 protection services throughout the state. As a, as a Commission member pointed out before earlier this  
4 meeting, what's, what we're struggling with here in San Diego County and also in Southern California for  
5 CDF we're experiencing a year-round fire situation due to changing climatic conditions and we're still  
6 trying to manage this with our fire protection resources, having them deployed, utilizing an eight month  
7 checkbook. You can understand it's very difficult. You know, we've, we have struggled with this, we  
8 have the abilities to, to utilize special staffings when conditions exist, but we're to the point now we really  
9 have to seriously look at getting the change and appropriate funding to provide this adequate level of fire  
10 protection in Southern California. We need to fund programs to ensure depth of human resources and  
11 support fire fighting operations. We need to acquire an improved initial CDF helicopters and again we  
12 stressed upon the need for a CDF assigned helicopter here in San Diego County. For several years through  
13 a special augmentation granted by administrations at the time, we have placed a helicopter in service here  
14 for the fire season period. Those, the helicopter resources time and time again have proven the  
15 effectiveness and it's time now to make that a permanent thing, not an occasional here and there as it's  
16 been. As we look at new technology that's available out there, we need to equip aviation aircraft with  
17 satellite tracking and integrated – and integration in a statewide dispatch to have a better idea of where  
18 aircraft are and, and times when everything's in the air and moving around. Increased use of infrared  
19 technologies for timely information and information on the fire spread. And we also want to strengthen the  
20 integration of the National Guard aircraft and also integrate the adjacent state National Guard resources that  
21 can come to the assistance of California as well. Chief Quintanar?

22 CHIEF QUINTANAR: We look at the recommendations, is the fatalities and the loss of properties  
23 is, is something that I think all of us who have experienced that we don't every want to go through that  
24 again. When this actually happening, the incident, we had fire personnel who didn't sleep for 72 hours.  
25 Chief Hawkins had stated at one point, "Nobody sleeps. If you sleep, somebody's gonna die and we're  
26 gonna lose homes." We had fire fighters who didn't, we couldn't get them food. We couldn't – they had to  
27 forage, we couldn't get them what they needed at the time because of the scale of what we're dealing with.  
28 And part of that is at least some of our, our recommendations is when we talk about redefining trigger

1 points under extreme conditions, these extreme conditions are becoming less and less extreme and they're  
2 becoming more and more common for all of us. And we think we can do this and improve the fire  
3 prediction models and services associated with wind events to make this happen.

4 We had no eyes in the sky, I mentioned that earlier. It's very frustrating – where is this fire? How  
5 do I get in? How do I get out? Can I get in? What am I gonna do? We have to wait. You can't wait;  
6 you've gotta get on this thing, I've got a feeling that this thing is gonna be going. I can't get in. Somehow,  
7 whether it's military or private industry we need to find the technology that gives our fire ground personnel  
8 the down link immediate capability of instantaneous situational awareness. It's not any different from what  
9 the military does. Additional training for fighting fire in the urban interface environment it is different.  
10 This requires time, it requires some money. (Unintelligible) a chief officer vehicle it really needs to have  
11 GPS units that give them, whether they're – wherever they're coming from, our MASH Mutual Aid  
12 program which brings personnel across the whole state. We bring assistance by hire personnel across the  
13 whole state. And it's real difficult when they say where am I? But GPS units in those vehicles would  
14 make a difference.

15 And then we've discussed in the past that putting a little thing we call a foam proportioner. You  
16 can't have 1,800 fire engines protecting 100,000 homes; it doesn't work. We need to change a little bit of  
17 what we do on the suppression side to be able to provide the foam proportioners that allow us to foam a  
18 house, gives greater probability of keeping that home from burning and move on to the next house.

19 And then, of course, the, the question of how do we communicate with each other. The high  
20 band/low band situation is extremely real and difficult at this time and we really need to have the capability  
21 to communicate effectively across band frequencies.

22 We need commitment to fund additional training and equipment and support improved interactions  
23 between the public and our emergency services. You know, one of the things in 1970 that came out from  
24 the Laguna Fire was the issue was quite often more about fire department to fire department. The fire  
25 departments can take the issues that we've presented here and would support can fix those issues. But what  
26 I see coming out here more is the public involvement that truly needs to occur with emergency services  
27 more than we ever have before. And we need the support to have that kind of public involvement and that  
28 kind of commitment so that the fire service truly has a better chance of picking up a lot of these fires and

1 doing a better job themselves. If we're to survive and continue living in a fire prone environment we must  
2 all work together to form effective working teams among communities and emergency services as never  
3 before. This will happen again. Thank you.

4 CHIEF WRIGHT: Mr. Chairman, a couple other comments. One is that we certainly want to  
5 acknowledge the hard and dangerous work the California fire fighters did on these fires in Southern  
6 California. The heroic acts that took place, you know, many, many stories of heroic action that took place  
7 that we'll probably never capture all of them for proper recognition. But those fire fighters went out there  
8 and did their jobs and they're very proud of what they did and we too should be very proud of them putting  
9 their lives on the line to get out there and, and do the job they did. And unfortunately we, we suffered  
10 losses, but if we look on the other side of it, look what was saved through those actions of those fire  
11 fighters giving it their all out there, this could have been a lot worse than we had.

12 I'd also like to touch upon the importance of proper staffing of fire suppression resources. We  
13 were very fortunate as Director Tuttle mentioned that we had a special augmentation funding from the  
14 administration over the last couple years here in Southern California that provided a fourth fire fighter on  
15 the CDF fire engines. Reports and analysis of that additional fire fighter has shown that the effectiveness  
16 of that fire fighting resource, that engine company increases production rates and also adds an additional  
17 layer of safety for that fire fighting crew out there doing that job.

18 Chief Quintanar mentioned this will happen again. As I mentioned earlier, I had been reviewing  
19 reports from the many other years and one I want to read you three excerpts from a document that was  
20 produced in 1972. As I think about your report that you'll be going forth with, I think of these excerpts of  
21 being close to what might show up in your report. And what I found ironic was that in reviewing all these  
22 documents, the '60's, '70's, '80's, '90's I said there was commonalities in all of them. And they say the  
23 same things. To read these statements from you. "From September blank to October blank, fire raged  
24 through more than a half million acres of brush and forest cover wild lands in California. These were 13  
25 days of uncontrolled flames which killed people, consumed hundreds of homes built in or on the edge of  
26 wild lands and damaged thousands of other structures." Sounds familiar. We just, we just experienced that.

27 The next one is, "The blank time and place, the fire disaster was unique in modern times, primarily  
28 in terms of geographical area involved, total acreage burned, the wild land urban nature of the fires, the



1 large number of homes completely destroyed and the large number of agencies, people and equipment  
2 involved.” Sounds familiar.

3           And the last one was, “Wildfires continue to take an intolerable heavy toll of life and property in  
4 California despite advances in technology and fire fighting effectiveness. Much of the destruction by  
5 wildfire occurs within a few critical days each year when temperatures soar, relative humidity drops to near  
6 zero and wind velocity increased to over 50 miles an hour.” Again, sounds familiar. These were all  
7 published in a 1972 review of the fires in Southern California. And I suspect these are pretty common  
8 today. And I left those blanks in because after reviewing those reports, you could change the date and the  
9 location of the particular fire and summarize what we just experienced. It’s very interesting to see how that  
10 goes.

11           Now, also looking at some of those recommendations occurring in those documents is that the fire  
12 protection side, the recommendations of fire prevention activities and fire suppression activities there have  
13 been improvements in that side of it. The pieces that have been lacking has been from the, the public,  
14 public side or the public policy side of matters dealing with land use planning, construction standards and  
15 things of that nature. We’ve made some improvements and I applaud San Diego City’s move forward to  
16 ban wood shake shingles. We gotta continue that. All the local government agencies have to band and  
17 work toward this to create that safer environment that people want to live with in the wild land.

18           I think I mentioned to you at the first hearing that in my vision the only way that citizens could  
19 probably live and survive safely in a wild land environment in Southern California under these conditions if  
20 they lived in a concrete bunker. The public’s not willing to live that way. They want nice homes, they  
21 want scenic area, they want that rustic view but they also have to be responsible and understand the risks of  
22 living in an environment like that. Now if we continue to allow development to continue in these areas  
23 then we as the public and then have to accept – has to accept the consequences of that. Is it acceptable to  
24 accept these losses we just occurred because people do not want to build the standards that will help protect  
25 them. If they don’t want to do that, then we’ll be back here in probably 2013 examining these same things.  
26 And we have a lot of old stuff, old construction out there existing and it’ll take time to get, get through that.  
27 But newer development going in, where it’s being placed, how it’s being built, we can control that for the  
28 future. So as I mentioned we have a lot of work ahead of us and it’s gonna take everybody’s input from the

1 local government side to, to I feel the federal level as well to bring us to a point where we can truly have a  
2 good fire safe California with everybody's effort.

3 Senator Campbell, that concludes our review and comments, recommendations associated with the  
4 Cedar Fire. We now stand ready for any questions the Commission may have.

5 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you very much, Chief. I want to make a couple of observations.  
6 First of all, I think one of the, the things that, and correct me if I've misinterpreted what you said, but  
7 because of the, of the wind conditions, the weather conditions and the brush conditions that we had, we  
8 experienced a degree of fire that was previously undefined that we hadn't seen before and this was one of  
9 the causes of the, of the expansion of the conflagration.

10 CHIEF WRIGHT: That's correct, sir.

11 CHAIR CAMPBELL: The second observation I want to make is that we live in a state with a  
12 growing population. That population is not going to cease to grow to my knowledge unless television  
13 changes or something. The, we have the opportunity to do something about it. I agree with you as we have  
14 moved out and created more homes in the wild land areas we haven't kept up to date with the building  
15 codes and conditions nor have we kept up to date with the, with the conditions of, of brush removal, the  
16 conditions of what we do about forest, the cleaning of the forest and those areas where we ought to be  
17 doing something and we're not doing something. This Commission has been charged by the Governor to,  
18 to take a look at all these issues and I think as – and I was first elected to the legislature in 1966, so I've  
19 been around Sacramento for a couple of years. And I think the thing that I've sat through, I've conducted a  
20 number of these hearings, I've conducted, I've done some of those reports or participating in them and I  
21 think for -- because of the massive devastation of this fire, the fires this year in Southern California, we  
22 finally have an opportunity, I believe, to politically make the changes that we haven't had the support with  
23 which to make – to do before. And I think that's one of the main values of this Commission is that we can  
24 take these recommendations and we have federal and state legislators on this Commission for that exact  
25 purpose where, where change is needed, we hope those legislators will lead the way and carry the bills  
26 necessary to bring about those changes. And I think the public support will be there. I have never seen a  
27 fire in California as devastating as the one this year unless you go back to the earthquake in what, 1906, in  
28 San Francisco when you lost a whole town. So I think we have, we have the, we have the support, the

1 public support and the political support finally to do something and we appreciate your recommendations.  
2 I don't think people realize exactly how difficult it is for the fire fighter out there on the line. You brought  
3 up the issue, Ray, of communications. Our next hearing will be on communications. This is the fourth,  
4 fourth hearing. We've, we, the – this Commission decided to hold a meeting, one of our meetings in all  
5 five of the counties involved and the fifth Committee hearing will be in February in Riverside and we're  
6 gonna look at, at the communications, the interoperability of the communications, communications  
7 between the state, local and federal, the military and see what we need to do and to improve and enhance  
8 those, those recommendations because that definitely is a problem. I think the cooperation between the,  
9 between the districts, the state, the local, the counties, the cities and the federal government and it's multi  
10 branches and I, what people seen I don't think realize is the magnitude of the number of agencies involved  
11 in this whole issues and it ranges anywhere from public transportation, it ranges to public health all the way  
12 down to the environmental issues involved and the building codes involved. So I think finally as a result of  
13 this terrible tragedy, and I can't begin to express my empathy to those who lost homes, to think that over  
14 3,600 families were without, without homes as a result of that fire is devastating. To think of loss of life  
15 that in the, the concomitant loss of life in the mudslides in San Bernardino here a few weeks back. It's a  
16 tragedy of massive proportions and I think we now have the political and I think public ability – support  
17 necessary to do something about it.

18 So I think the recommendations from this Commission as my hope will not sit on the, sit on  
19 somebody's in-box somewhere and gather dust. So I thank you for your presentation and I open it now to  
20 members of the Commission who wish to ask questions. Go ahead. Senator Alpert.

21 SENATOR ALPERT: Yeah, I was struck as you were talking and – about as you went through  
22 sort of the progress and you talked about particularly in Ramona to the San Vicente Estates and the fact that  
23 it was an area with 10,000 residents at really in what at one time had been wild lands. And I guess one of  
24 the things I'm thinking about is the past duties of CDF it seems to me historically were to protect the  
25 forests as opposed to so many structures. And I'm wondering in in the future as we look at it, and I don't  
26 mean just in San Diego, but as we look at the entire state, and these things are occurring lots of other places  
27 besides here where suddenly their whole development in what used to be a forested area, have we thought  
28 about how we should actually structure fire departments? What should – I mean, I know that we come to

1 mutual aid with the federal and the state and the locals, but who should actually be the primary person  
2 responsible and should it be something that is done? I mean, how do we actually set this up? How do we  
3 actually pay for these things? Who becomes responsible for the, you know, for providing the fire  
4 protection and who becomes responsible for paying for it and should we be looking in a new way since this  
5 really is a very different time?

6 CHIEF WRIGHT: Very complex area that definitely needs to be looked in. Little history on, on  
7 CDF is that, you know, our primary responsibility is for the state's natural resources. But through times  
8 and changing and California – the changing California has changed our role in the fire protection arena  
9 where we do have development moving heavily into the wild land areas to where, you know, fire fighting  
10 and pastures was, was basically confining it to wild land areas and, and using the strategies and tactics  
11 necessary there to confine it to, to as small a acreage as you can and not having concerns and dealing with  
12 situations of improvements within that same fire area. Through time fire protection was developed in those  
13 areas either through fire districts or annexations into incorporated cities which then expand their fire  
14 protection to deal with the developed areas. In, in particular and in San Diego County is made up of  
15 several fire fighting districts and many of them being fire protection districts whereas CDF still retains the  
16 wild land fire protection responsibilities. And in conjunction working with those districts who are  
17 responsible for the improvement or the properties within the state responsibility lands it, you have an  
18 overlapping of fire protection responsibilities. And as we get to the situation of these mega fires are  
19 occurring and these will be the fires of the future, these continuing developments into the, into wild land  
20 areas, the question then raises that who should pay for this. It was the state, CDF's struggling now with,  
21 with our ability to protect our primary responsibility of the wild land areas and also deal with the  
22 encroachment of development in those areas. Local government is, is strained with their financial abilities  
23 and, and you know, their means of funding. So it is becoming very difficult and it definitely needs to be  
24 looked into. As I know that there are studies being done here in San Diego County to look at the potential  
25 consolidation of resources and what have you. The whole, the whole situation definitely needs to be looked  
26 at and we have a lot of work ahead of us and, and one, it comes down to the funding.

27 DIRECTOR TUTTLE: Let me speak very specifically because it does deal with the CDF budget.  
28 As Chief Wright explained, the underlying wild land responsibility is CDF as structures are developed and

1 you have local fire protection districts that have structural responsibility on top of that. As areas become  
2 more and more developed, more dense, the Board of Forestry periodically reviews density of development  
3 and they remove it from, it's no longer wild land, it's now developed land, it comes out of CDF's  
4 responsibility base. And then it, it does pass to the, to local government, whatever the local district is. As a  
5 – California has more wild land inter – urban interface than any other state in the country. We have the  
6 biggest population, we have the biggest wild land area and as the whole front face of the Sierra, the whole  
7 Southern California, all through the coast ranges, up through Mendocino and on up now into Humboldt,  
8 into Shasta, Redding, all of this is urban interface as homes move in to what used to be open wild land,  
9 wild land areas. The, as California experiences its, its budget pressures in our last budget, we have  
10 approximately – this is plus or minus – of around a \$600 million budget. Around \$350-\$360 of that is  
11 general fund money. The determination was made by, by the legislature that \$50 million of that would be  
12 raised from a new fee and that was passed in the last legislature to generate \$50 million through  
13 assessments on, on parcels within the wild land area to deal with this, this concept. Now, there are some  
14 technical difficulties with the actual language of the trailer bill and there will be some cleanup language  
15 coming through this session. But that issue is, is before the legislature right now, should residents moving  
16 into the wild land area residents pay an additional share of CDF's responsibility? Thank you.

17 CHIEF QUINTANAR: Could I add to that just for a second, Mr. Chair?

18 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Yes, sir.

19 CHIEF QUINTANAR: Federal responsibility is for national forest lands and there are private  
20 lands within a lot of those national forest lands. The, we have the authority to take whatever action is  
21 necessary to protect those federal lands and that includes putting out a fire in a structure. We don't have  
22 the authority to go in the structure. And when you see green engines or forest service of federal engines in  
23 and around the communities, it's because those fires are anticipated to be moving up to the wild lands or  
24 the federal lands and we're working with the communities to, to keep those fires from doing that. There is  
25 a big issue quite often on who's gonna pay for this and that is a big issue.

26 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you. Supervisor Cox.

27 SUPERVISOR COX: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A couple of comments and then a question. I  
28 had – at our first meeting I know Chief Wright spoke and I think that as I recall there were something like

1 32 different fires going on in that last week of October and that first week of November. And I think the  
2 first lesson I learned is it's, you're in a lot better position if you can be the first fire that occurs as opposed  
3 to the last fire. As we found out in San Diego County, a lot of our resources were sent up to San  
4 Bernardino County and other fires that were going on in Southern California and I think those, those fires  
5 couple days of the fire, particularly that Sunday and going into Monday, it was, it was a very frightening  
6 situation I think for, for everybody that was here in San Diego County. We find ourselves in San Diego  
7 County where actually our deputy sheriff's, we had two deputy sheriff's that were signed up in Valley  
8 Center, we had three that were in Ramona and it was because of the time of that Cedar Fire when it really  
9 started turning ugly which was in the early hours of Sunday, most people didn't have their radios on, didn't  
10 have their T.V.'s on, they went to bed maybe seeing a glow off in the distance and as you so I think  
11 accurately described, the speed with which this fire moved we literally had deputy sheriff's that were  
12 banging on doors at 1:30, 2:00, 2:30 in the morning to tell people get out. Again, the fatalities that we had,  
13 the very tragic fatalities we had were almost all of them in those early hours of, of Sunday.

14 One of the things that I wanted to focus on and I realize we're gonna be talking maybe about this  
15 more at the next meeting, but since it's pertinent to San Diego County, the communications or how we're  
16 gonna improve communications, and this is not meant as a criticism of CDF, it's one of those things that,  
17 you know, maybe we have an opportunity to, to see if we can do things better. I know that we had an  
18 emergency operation center activated for the County of San Diego and the City of San Diego and I think  
19 two or three other cities for a brief period of time had their emergency operation centers activated. One of  
20 the things that was frustrating to me and I spent maybe the better hour, better part of 12-16 hours from that  
21 Sunday through that Friday in our emergency operation center, was the, the inability to get timely  
22 information. And I realize you're fighting a fire and that's your highest priority and I understand that;  
23 there's no question about that. But maybe in the future it would be helpful to have the ability to have  
24 something that, that maybe even as a, you know, as a support person, public information person or  
25 something like that that could be assigned from the very beginning. I think we, we, we got somebody that  
26 was finally assigned I believe on that Tuesday morning of the week of the fires, but we were just deluged  
27 by, by media. And frankly in the early hours on Sunday, most of Sunday I think all the media was focusing  
28 on the City of San Diego because it was certainly burning right up through Scripps Ranch and was very

1 close to where most of the media was. Overall, I think the media in San Diego County did a very good job  
2 of getting information out. But there was a, I think a, a, a missed opportunity. Most of the information that  
3 we had in our emergency operation center from CDF was anywhere from 12 to in some cases 24 hours old  
4 as far as, you know, the acreage that was consumed and that's, that's an interesting statistic, but I think  
5 more importantly we needed to be able to get information out as quickly as we possibly could for  
6 evacuation purposes. And unfortunately, I think one, at least one of the media I think gave some erroneous  
7 information in regards to fatalities as it related to fire fighters, certainly one was tragic, but I think one of  
8 the stations had indicated that there was a higher number and that was unfortunate because I know  
9 everybody that was out there was working really hard. One of the things I think we are learning in San  
10 Diego County is we have a multi-species conservation program we're very proud of. We have 172,000  
11 (117,000?) of land that is being acquired in the City of San Diego and the County of San Diego and some  
12 of the other cities to be put permanent open space. I think one of the lessons we are learning is you can't  
13 just buy it and say, gosh, haven't we done a great job. You have to actively manage it and that includes  
14 clearing and perhaps some controlled burns at times. Given the situation with the bark beetle in this  
15 county, and I know it's particularly true in San Bernardino County, we've got to do a better job of, of  
16 basically managing our, our forest resources and I think that's one of the lessons that we will learn in San  
17 Diego County. I think we may have an opportunity and I think the mayor made reference to the task force  
18 that he and I created very soon after the fires to look at how we can coordinate things between the City of  
19 San Diego and the County of San Diego. Resources that we have, how we can better utilize those  
20 resources, what we can do to be better prepared in the future. We have representation from the, the Navy  
21 and the Marine Corp on there and I think there's some very positive things that, that may come as far as the  
22 discussions with them and how, you know, that's not their primary charge but certainly there is  
23 opportunities to do training on a more regular basis and maybe they can be an additional resource.

24 So, I, I guess my question or my comment to you is I think in the future it would be, it would be  
25 helpful if we could have an established protocol and I realize that you're dealing with 18 cities in San  
26 Diego County and the county. The county's emergency operation center I think is the regional facility. I  
27 think it would be helpful to have somebody that was there from the get-go to make sure that we get the  
28 information communicated back and forth because as much as we were trying with cell phones and other

1 means, we, we just had a, a, a lack of current information I thin would have been helpful and very timely.  
2 We are looking at trying to implement a regional reverse 911 system. Again, I think one of the things that  
3 was very frightening for a lot of people is to be getting a bang on the door or a sheriff's deputy going down  
4 their street with a PA system saying get out now and people having no forewarning whatsoever. I'm aware  
5 of the fact I think Contra Costa County and Santa Barbara County and some others do have a reverse 911  
6 system that can be programmed so that in an emergency you can literally have thousands of phone calls  
7 going out simultaneously with different messages which is probably very helpful as you get into more  
8 mountainous areas as far as directing people where to go. So, I don't know where the question is in there  
9 other than the fact that I would appreciate it if we could maybe have some further discussions on how we  
10 can have better lines of communication, more timely information and you guys did a tremendous job so  
11 don't take it as a criticism. It's just lessons learned and how can we be better prepared.

12 CHIEF WRIGHT: Yeah. Thank you for your comments and they are much appreciated. And we  
13 had the opportunity to speak on, on this matter before and we have discussed it with our local unit. One of  
14 the things that, that I would like to see in the future and this is what these are about, what are those things  
15 we can do to improve in the future, is that you know, one, I would like to see and certainly CDF will  
16 commit to this and I would like to see a commitment from San Diego County is to involve CDF in a more  
17 integrated role in your county's disaster preparedness emergency services role. And I think by doing that  
18 and getting those positions established in the communications there it will help in that prompt response to  
19 your EOC operations when they occur. Throughout the state we're intimately involved in emergency  
20 services operations in other counties and so it's very easy for CDF to be there right in the beginning  
21 because we're an integrated role in that particular EOC operation. So I see the same thing as very, very  
22 possible, doable here and CDF will commit to that and I would hope that San Diego County would also  
23 provide that commitment.

24 SUPERVISOR COX: I will guarantee you that the County of San Diego will commit to that.  
25 Thank you.

26 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you. Mr. Caine's representing as Senator Brulte.

27 MR. CAINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question, first I'd like to precede it by recognizing  
28 that CDF is one of the most admirable agencies I've encountered in my time on – involved with fire safe



1 council work. And the collaboration effort shown between CDF and other agencies is incredibly good. I, I  
2 think that it's admirable in every respect I can imagine. And so I, I want to make sure you understand that  
3 my question is not one of extreme criticism; I'm looking for an answer on something that I can't  
4 understand. Earlier in the testimony, Chief Quintanar stated that on the 26<sup>th</sup> at 1735 hours that it was pitch  
5 black. However, the report that was provided to the Commission includes a, a document with the caption  
6 Night of Fire at the top. It, it refers to the Cedar blaze taken from the *Los Angeles Times* December 28,  
7 2003. In this report, a CDF representative of 34 years experience and very knowledgeable obviously about  
8 fires made a call at 5:33, that's 1733, two minutes before you indicated it's pitch black, dialing 911 to the  
9 Ramona air attack base trying to reach that base, gave up on 911, dialed direct to Monte Vista Command  
10 Center 1739 p.m. It says here which would be four minutes after it was reportedly pitch black. However, a  
11 sheriff's, a San Diego Sheriff's unit at 1750 p.m. reports they were searching for a lost hunter and I'm sure  
12 they weren't doing it in pitch black conditions and they followed a rising smoke and a field – to a field of  
13 flames. I don't understand how it can be pitch black with a sheriff's hunter outfit looking for a lost hunter  
14 by air. And why aircraft would be grounded regarding a fire issue, but allowed to fly for a ground search  
15 by air of a lost hunter. And I need you to help me understand the discrepancies in either this report from  
16 the *LA Times* or the reports that you have.

17 CHIEF QUINTANAR: I stand corrected. That was the last day of daylight savings. It was 1835  
18 when it was pitch black.

19 MR. CAINE: Okay. 1835 which would be an hour later. So this report it goes on to say that  
20 aircraft might have put out the fire which was less than 10 miles away. There were two aircraft on the field  
21 at Monte Vista – or excuse me, at Ramona air attack base; one able to carry 1,200 gallons of flame  
22 retardant – or excuse me, two airplanes able to drop 1,200 gallons of flame retardant. One aircraft  
23 helicopter just landed capable of carrying 350 gallons, rotors were still running and yet it was not  
24 dispatched. And my question based on that would be then with the experience, the equipment, the training,  
25 the judgment of the professionals that I've come to have a great deal of admiration for, what flexibility can  
26 be reasonably established to provide a window for the distinct purpose of providing air attack support at the  
27 earliest possibly opportunity using that experience, equipment and judgment of the professionals in the  
28 field? You obviously do not have eyes able to see this situation; these pilots do. How can we establish a

1 way we can make that happen, that they can be flexible enough to use that last hour of light more  
2 effectively? That's my question.

3 CHIEF WRIGHT: Commissioners, I would like to introduce to you Chief Mike Padilla. He's our  
4 Chief of our aviation unit in Sacramento and he's been involved looking into these issues associated with  
5 what we term as cut off times and when we ground aircraft for the evening hours. And hopefully he'll be  
6 able to walk you through those issues associated with this concern.

7 MR. CAINE: Okay.

8 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Chief, I appreciate this because this is one of the things we want to look at  
9 as, as the hearing, as the hearings go on. So thank you.

10 CHIEF PADILLA: Good afternoon. With regard to cut off time, we're looking at that with the  
11 Forest Service right now. Yes, there was a lot of concern as to what constituted visibility at that time. And  
12 when you're looking at ambient light for a period of that time, that's a consideration we have when we're  
13 looking at cut off time. And it progressively changes throughout the year as the sun sets. I think that  
14 there's probably some latitude to look at it, but I'd be very careful at, at changing what has been a policy  
15 for a long period of time based upon our experience. The visibility associated with a helicopter pilot is  
16 much different than that of an air tanker who's doing a minimum of 120 knots at a higher altitude, so being  
17 both a fix wing and helicopter pilot, I can tell you that there is a greater difference. And being a pilot I can  
18 tell you I can put out any fire at any time, but I certainly would like to have some guidelines and that's what  
19 we're looking for here. You, and you can quote me on that, too.

20 MR. CAINE: Thank you.

21 [Laughter.]

22 CHIEF WRIGHT: Can you tell us your preference?

23 MR. CAINE: You have been quoted. You will be part of the official record. You indicated a  
24 difference –

25 CHIEF PADILLA: Okay.

26 MR. CAINE: -- but is that –

27 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Oh, I'm sorry.  
28

1 MR. CAINE: Is the airplane the one you would fly or is it the helicopter the one you would fly if  
2 that under – given these conditions?

3 CHIEF PADILLA: Visibility are, an FAR is our Federal Air Regulations are less for helicopters  
4 than fix swing and that's part of what drives this whole issue as well. Dennis Holberg, who's with the  
5 Forest Service also, could answer some of their concerns and we have found, and I think I haven't read the  
6 study yet, but we have found some differences in – that we need to address, but they're minor with regard  
7 to what constitutes when we can be over fire and not over a fire. And our concern is again for the safety of  
8 the pilots and we've had people out there, they'll fly 'til it's dark and we, it's not for lack of trying, but  
9 that's why we set guidelines down. And I think with regard to what happened in Ramona is is that there's  
10 some misunderstanding as to who was reporting what at what time. Our tanker pilots were following the  
11 policy and procedures. I mean, I'm sure had they known the fire was going to be what it was, they  
12 certainly would have taken that extra step and many times we're having to keep them and make sure they  
13 follow the, the procedures and have the self-discipline in order to do something right when other people  
14 aren't watching. And I can tell you we've lost a lot of pilots who haven't and it's certainly not something  
15 we want to have happen again.

16 CHAIR CAMPBELL: But we want to fly at those hours as a predator if we can get them from the  
17 Department of Defense at that hour of night. Mr. Wolf. I'm, I'm sorry, were you through, Mr. Caine?

18 MR. CAINE: Yes, I'm done, thank you.

19 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you.

20 MR. WOLF: Thank you. I want to congratulate all of you on a excellent presentation. I was  
21 interested in your discussion of previous history. Some of it I'm aware of and some of it was before my  
22 time. Over the years, I know that CDF has had erosion of it's capability as far as engine companies and  
23 hand crews. And since you touched on the history aspect, could you go back and kind of tell us maybe the  
24 last couple decades has CDF lost some of it's capabilities as far as number of engine companies and hand  
25 crews and what effect that might have on what you had on your presentation for depth of resources?

26 CHIEF WRIGHT: Commissioners, to give you a, a view of what CDF looked like, you know,  
27 back in the '80's, over the last couple years we, we started to look at our, our history of where we came  
28 from as far as resources as we, as we looked at our changing role in California. With the, the increase in

1 population, the stresses that's being put on our organization to provide an adequate level of fire protection,  
2 we looked back and said how were we funded back in the '70's and '80's? And through unfortunate  
3 budget reductions to give you an idea in researching from the at the early '80's up and through the mid  
4 '90's we've calculated we've lost – CDF has lost through budget reductions 25 engine companies  
5 statewide. During this same period, we had upwards to 233 fire crews statewide. Now, currently we stand  
6 at 336 engine companies statewide and as of last year, in the beginning of last year we had 197 fire crews.  
7 Now our fire crews are made up of either inmate fire fighters, wards for the Youth Authority, and until last  
8 year we had Conservation Corp members at two of our fire camps. Through unfortunate budget reductions  
9 last year, we lost eight fire crews through what I call collateral damage to CDF because of reduction for the  
10 Conservation Corp. We shut down two fire centers, one at Butte and one here in San Diego La Sima  
11 because of the reductions and the collateral damage to CDF from the CCC reductions. We've been  
12 working hard. This year we took steps to 1) backfill the Butte Fire Center utilizing CDF fire fighters. So  
13 you can imagine taking a fire camp out of a 41 camp system statewide. It's produces a tremendous hole in  
14 fire protection in a given area. In Butte we were able to backfill with CDF fire fighters. Here in San Diego  
15 County we've been working feverishly with the Department of Corrections to work on backfilling La Sima  
16 Camp with inmate fire fighters. Now through budget difficulties the Department of Corrections has been  
17 having to provide funding to provide their adequate staff there and also to provide inmates which we've  
18 been using overage inmates out of our McCame Valley Camp in eastern San Diego County to basically  
19 spike out fire crews up in that Julian/Quemac area on a daily basis using a camp to the east. So starting out  
20 with 197 crews we lost eight truly, but we were able to backfill through emergency funding.

21 Now our concerns as we go into this year we've been notified by California Youth Authority that  
22 they are going to be closing two fire camp – their side of the fire camp, the Cooperative Adventures we  
23 have, one at the end of February and a second camp in the end of June. Now that equates to ten additional  
24 fire crew losses to CDF because of budget reductions to other agencies. Now we've been proactive in, in  
25 working with CDC to say how can we recover from this, are there camps and locations and facility  
26 infrastructures in place of these other camps that CDC can backfill and we can keep those camps open  
27 utilizing inmates as the fire fighting staffing at those camps. It's uncertain right now what kind of success  
28 we'll have in that. One camp, Los Robles, the CYA camp we currently have is an institution based camp.

1 We CDF do not really have facilities there to go off and say, "CDC, can you backfill with inmates at this  
2 particular facility?" We don't, we don't have those facilities there. Mt. Boulian is the other targeted camp  
3 that we're having to deal with. Now that facility lends itself to a possibility of a backfill with CDC. But  
4 again it, it relies on budgetary issues is that would CDC be able to have the funding to provide the inmates  
5 and the correctional officers there to keep those fire crews in place in those facilities. You know, we're  
6 very concerned. As we talk about all the work that needs to be done and fuels reduction, CDF fire crews  
7 play a vital role in that statewide. That's the, that's the handwork, that's those crews out doing that cutting  
8 of the brush, the brush removal, the burning, the prescribed burning. That's the labor force that makes it  
9 possible to get this fuel reduction done. As we continue and to work toward meeting the, the goals of the  
10 California fire plan again that fuels reduction and the loss, the continued loss of fire crews is definitely  
11 going to have an impact on what we can do to provide that labor force out there. One, for the emergency  
12 response to fires and also other emergency disasters in the states from floods, earthquakes and other  
13 disasters to the fuels reduction work that those crews do. So we're very concerned about that and that we  
14 hope that, you know, consideration will be made to, to help us keep those vital crews. Back in 2000, AB  
15 1999 which was sponsored Assemblyman Dickerson moved forward to reestablish 17 fire crews in the  
16 CDF system. In the, in the 2001-2002 period we were able to, with funding put back two crews out of  
17 those 17 identified that needed to be put back in the system. That brought us to the 197. Now we're going  
18 backwards again. It's very hard to recover.

19 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you. Mr. Wolf, you said much of that was before your time.  
20 Unfortunately, most of that was not before my time. MR. SEDIVEC.

21 MR. SEDIVEC: You covered much of what my question was in your response to Mr. Wolf's. But  
22 is there any way that you could identify the disparity between the current status of a fire crew staffing  
23 versus what the actual need that you see is with it being such an important part of local mitigation issues as  
24 well as statewide response?

25 CHIEF WRIGHT: We have various documents that, that I feel well document the true need of fire  
26 crew work out there. With the ever demands placed on those crews, there's more work out there for them  
27 to conduct than we'll ever have time to provide those crews for. It's – the study that went forth when –  
28 with in support of AB 1999 with the re-establishment, it was documented the amount of work that needs to

1 be done out there and with the reduction of crews what won't get done. So there, there is information out  
2 there that we can correlate that and I feel that it would, you know, stand and provide that justification to  
3 support additional fire crews.

4 MR. SEDIVÉC: Could, could – to follow up, can we get that information?

5 CHIEF WRIGHT: We can certainly provide that information.

6 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Alright. Yeah. Congresswoman Davis.

7 CONGRESSWOMAN DAVIS: Thank you. Thank you for being here. I don't think there's any  
8 question that there's a management question in terms of our resources and we have to understand that better  
9 and advocate for it. But in terms of organizationally and the way in which jurisdiction was handed off from  
10 one organization agency to another, are there any surprises that you have seen in terms of how that was  
11 done or whether it could have been done differently? What should we learn from that? And is it a total  
12 restructuring that we may be needing to look at in terms of how we, how we come together better in that  
13 regard or, or do you think actually the organization probably worked as well as it could but the conditions  
14 were such that we were under, undermanned, understaffed, underresourced?

15 CHIEF WRIGHT: Well, my perspective I think overall, again I said that the fire protection system  
16 in California is second to none. And under the extreme conditions that we experienced during this fire  
17 siege, you know, it was truly tested, how we, how we operate in a, in a incident organization and the hand-  
18 off or say of jurisdictional responsibility. The Incident Command System which was established back in  
19 the '70's because of it was a recommendation out of the reviews of the fires, you know, established those  
20 protocols in dealing when fires crossed jurisdictions and how we, how we operate and who has  
21 responsibilities and what have you. So, you know, the system has been in place for a number of years, it's  
22 been well used and proven and it, it works. What I think needs to occur is one, because we've had a  
23 number of from what CDF terms changing faces, not only in our organizations, but all fire protection  
24 organizations statewide with, with retirements and, and people leaving for whatever reasons we've had a  
25 change of, you know, fire fighting leadership and in some cases they may not be totally aware of their roles  
26 and responsibilities given situations where they are playing in a unified command role. Now, typically the  
27 forest agencies, the federal agencies and state agencies we deal with this on a daily basis during our fire  
28 season. But when it gets in to local jurisdictional areas small communities like what we would have here in

1 San Diego County may not have had the in depth experience of dealing in a major wild land situation,  
2 multiple jurisdiction unified command setting. And it could be intimidating for some that you're, you're,  
3 you have a small district, you have relatively small resources to commit to this and you're walking into this  
4 huge organization and you have a role. Do they truly understand their roles and responsibilities and, and  
5 what their jurisdiction is responsible for. I think we can continue training on that within the fire protection  
6 system through our FIREScope organizations to, to help bring about that and that's through exercise and  
7 continued education and what have you. So the system is there in place to deal with these situations where  
8 it crosses jurisdictions. And we have to continue to, you know, provide that coordination and that  
9 cooperation amongst all fire protection entities throughout California because it takes all of us working  
10 together to deal with these fires when they come upon us. So the system's in place, it needs to be used,  
11 folks need to know the roles and responsibilities and it'll continue to work.

12 CONGRESSWOMAN DAVIS: May I add just one comment there, back up while we're here.

13 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Yes, go ahead.

14 CONGRESSWOMAN DAVIS: Chief Wright is being very polite.

15 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Chief Wright is always polite.

16 CONGRESSWOMAN DAVIS: Frankly, it is very difficult to deal in San Diego County because  
17 of the fractionated nature of your fire protection system. And to the extent that you can, I understand that  
18 consolidation is a very difficult issue for you, but to the – even if you don't go that far, if you can increase  
19 your coordination, training, integration of this multi-jurisdictional setting, the political setting that you have  
20 here, it would really help. Because the, the – as Jim said the, the state and the federal agencies have been  
21 doing this, we practice on it all the time, that's our job, we do it. The San Diego – there's no single voice  
22 to speak to. There is no county fire department to speak to which makes your EOC easier and makes your  
23 fire department response easier. I, I know there are other issues here that cloud that, but to the extent you  
24 can give us more unified bodies to work with, then the system will work better.

25 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you all very much. We appreciate your testimony here today. And  
26 thank you for being here.

27 MR. McORMOND: Chairman, can I, can I have a question there, Chairman?

28 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Yes, I'm sorry. I, I, I didn't see you raise your hand.

1 MR. McORMOND: Okay.

2 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Go ahead, Chief.

3 MR. McORMOND: Um, I –

4 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Would you identify yourself for us?

5 MR. McORMOND: Ed McOrmond. I, Pechanga (phonetic) Fire Chief. I'm representing the  
6 Bureau of Indian Affairs. I got a couple questions for CDF. I know we've been talking about budget  
7 constraints and with past budget cuts and potential future budget cuts, where do you feel your air program  
8 is today under its current status and where is it going to go in the future? I have a two part question but I'll  
9 go ahead and have you answer that first, please.

10 CHIEF WRIGHT: Okay. As far as CDF, where we are today and I'm glad that Chief Padilla is  
11 sitting next to me here, we'll tag team this, but where we currently are with nine primary helicopters  
12 deployed strategically throughout the state, that's what we have and also two maintenance spares, in our air  
13 tanker fleet we have 23 air tankers. We're, we're probably a good two-thirds of the way through our  
14 modernization of our S2 tanker fleet that we will continue that and that is to be completed by '05 – '04  
15 excuse me, so we will have a completely modernized S2 fleet turbonized aircraft more, more retardant  
16 capability. Where we have to look in the future, and I always have to caution him because he wants every  
17 airplane and helicopter he can get and we would like to have that, but what we have to do is look to the  
18 future is what is the future fire gonna bring us? We've already seen that the heavy, heavy helicopter is  
19 probably gonna be the urban interface choice of rotor wing helicopter because one of its payload capability,  
20 and we do that currently right now with our Super Huey aircraft we're delivering is about 350 gallons of  
21 water. Lighter aircraft are only dealing with just a 100 gallons or so. So obviously it takes a lot more. But  
22 when we have a heavy lift helicopter capable of more water delivery, water foam mixture delivery it's  
23 better off and they become very vital in urban interface settings.

24 We, we currently need to, and we're working on a modernization plan for our helicopter fleet.  
25 We're utilizing Viet Nam era Huey helicopters which we have saved the State of California millions of  
26 dollars in utilizing federal excess property equipment. We have retrofitted those helicopters to meet CDF's  
27 mission, but those, those resources have basically a shelf life or an airframe life and we're pressing that.  
28 We figure that probably with our current fleet in the configuration we're in and the expected life



1 expectancy of the airframes, we're probably good – Mike, correct me if I'm wrong here – but we're  
2 looking at probably within 10 years we need to go to a new helicopter. Unfortunately, the Federal Excess  
3 Property Program administered through the federal government is starting to dry up on those available  
4 airframes that we've been utilizing in the UH1 Huey helicopters. So we need to look forward and find and  
5 evaluate what is CDF's helicopter of the future. And we're looking. We've seen several versions of the  
6 Sikorsky Blackhawk or the fire version of that, the Firehawk. The Los Angeles County utilizes two of  
7 those now. It's a very good evaluation for us. We can look in to what Los Angeles County has done with  
8 those improved aircraft. And we need to look in the future for the State of California and look at. We feel  
9 that the State of California is in a position that because of the drying up of FEPP is that we're gonna have  
10 to fund probably new aircraft, new helicopter aircraft in the future for CDF to continue it's aviation role.  
11 Anything to add?

12 MR. McORMOND: You mentioned one helicopter here in San Diego that – Is one adequate?

13 CHIEF PADILLA: No, it's, it really isn't and that's what I probably want to address. CDF has got  
14 a world class program, air program, both air tankers and helicopters. We've pretty much set the high mark  
15 for the helicopter programs 10 years ago and we're looking, always looking to the future. San Diego has  
16 always been an area where we've really had to support it through contract aircraft. I think with what has  
17 happened this last year and what we've done last year and the extended fire seasons that we're seeing here  
18 in the south that one helicopter, whether it's CDF, city, county or whatever more than likely isn't going to  
19 be adequate for your needs. I think that when you start looking at initial attack and how you put your  
20 program together –

21 [End of Tape 1, Side B – Beginning of Tape 2, Side A)

22 CHIEF PADILLA: -- at Ramona along with an air attack plus we've, we've dedicated a helicopter,  
23 it's at Gillespie and that's, that's out of our pocket in order to cover the needs down here. I think in a  
24 coordinated effort in San Diego you, you should look at something like L.A. County and what they do.  
25 Look at L.A. City and what they've got. A program down here is absolutely, absolutely necessary. I think  
26 CDF has got some expertise that can help you, we've got equipment we can help, but we can also look at  
27 the future for you. So, again, look very closely at your resources. Bringing in military resources is a good  
28

1 answer, but it's not the only answer and it's not going to solve all your problems either. National Guard is  
2 not always there and neither is active duty, so.

3 MR. McORMOND: I guess my question is what can this Commission do to assist on helping the  
4 state implement a better air program?

5 CHIEF PADILLA: Well, I hate to say money.

6 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Let me, let me answer that. We will be deliberating that particular issue –

7 CHIEF PADILLA: Yeah.

8 CHAIR CAMPBELL: -- on the recommendations that we will make.

9 CHIEF PADILLA: Yeah.

10 CHAIR CAMPBELL: That's one of the recommendations will go on. So, does that answer your  
11 question, Chief?

12 MR. McORMOND: Yes. That –

13 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you.

14 CHIEF PADILLA: Thank you.

15 MR. McORMOND: Okay.

16 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Ladies and gentlemen, we're going to take three more questions and then  
17 we're going to take a, take a break. And before we recognize the last three, I wanted to introduce  
18 Assemblywoman Kehoe from San Diego who was just arrived a long time ago now come to think of it.  
19 She was a few minutes late and didn't get introduced, but much of the fire in this area occurred in her  
20 district. And now I'd like to recognize Assemblyman Jay LaSuer. Jay?

21 ASSEMBLYMAN LaSUER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have maybe a quick question and then  
22 some comments with regards to some comments that were made by your group. How many people are  
23 here from the East County area? This is where the majority of this fire was. How many were in the actual  
24 area of the fire? Thank you. I wanted to give you a little idea of some of the things that occurred. The  
25 comment was made with regards to finger pointing and with regards to the media and local elected officials  
26 or state elected officials, what have you, and the comment was made during the fire.

27 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Assemblyman, would you draw that mic a little closer to you, please?  
28 Thank you. Speak up a little.

1 ASSEMBLYMAN LaSUER: How about now?

2 CHAIR CAMPBELL: I'm the one who has the hearing problem.

3 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Don't be so bashful, Jay.

4 ASSEMBLYMAN LaSUER: Because I want to give you an idea what occurred here. Before I  
5 start this, I want to tell you something. I, as a young deputy sheriff, spent my first 36 hours of the day one  
6 day when the Laguna Fire started working out there as a deputy sheriff. I, during this particular fire, was  
7 out in the fire area with local law enforcement and watched what was being done by our fire fighters from –  
8 I see engine companies from God knows where, everywhere, places I didn't, didn't know existed and  
9 others I couldn't pronounce. But I have to tell you at no time and continuously throughout this fire we did  
10 nothing but praise the efforts of these fire fighters. Because we were there and we went out and we saw.  
11 Because of the experience of my background working many times with fire fighters I have a great deal of  
12 admiration and respect of them.

13 I was critical of some of the administration that was involved. The first day of this fire occurred  
14 here it happened at the local congressman's chief of staff, state senator, and another state assemblyman and  
15 I met in my office to see what could we do. The congressman had been through the White House and the  
16 Pentagon and received permission to move federal aircraft to California. I called Sacramento to speak with  
17 CDF to find out who had the authority to authorize this. I ended up speaking to a gentleman up there.  
18 Mind you at the time I was speaking to him, I was watching the fire on television being filmed from a news  
19 helicopter. I was told that there was no way a helicopter could fly in that fire nor could a fixed wing  
20 aircraft fly in that fire and they'd have to mull this over. I spoke with a congressman and he said I have  
21 spoken with a Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, can you have this gentleman call me, I will give him his  
22 personal home phone number. He said all I care about is let's move these aircraft to California. Let's get  
23 them out there so when they are needed, they are there and they are ready. I called the same gentleman  
24 back and told him this. There was a conversation. And I have been told by some that this gentleman did  
25 not have the authority to authorize that. But a memo from the Congressman with regards to the  
26 conversation, the congressman said the operative words were, "I think we'll just hold on this." We're not  
27 gonna, in other words, we're not going to do that. They're not going to move them to California. I think  
28 it's important that we understand that when a group of people are pleading for help, mind you in my area I

1 lost over 2,000 homes, 13 people killed. And when four state elected officials are pleading for help from  
2 state fire fighting officials, this is not finger pointing, this is a plea for help. And because there is  
3 persistence this is not finger pointing, this is speaking for over a million people in this county whose homes  
4 are being threatened and being burned. I have spoken to people in my district that while they're going  
5 through the rubble of what was their home, it is now nothing but a bunch of ash, cannot speak, because of  
6 tears running down their face because what they have lost, they've lost the largest investment of their life.  
7 They're underinsured because of the area they live in. And they've lost their home. A good 2,000 in my  
8 area. Some of my areas look as though they were bombed by an A-bomb. There were four telephone calls  
9 made to the Governor of this state who would not talk to us, who would not return a phone call and we  
10 wanted to make a request to something be done. A letter was faxed directly to his office, I have copies  
11 here, signed by three members of the State Legislature and the then Governor would not respond to those of  
12 us that represented well over a million people in this county. The local fire chief called this same  
13 individual and said will you move these aircraft out here, we're going to need them bad. When he finished  
14 his phone call he walked out and we asked him what's the answer? He says, "I don't get it. I don't get it.  
15 They won't do it. I don't understand it." We had fire fighters come up to us and say, "Do not stop what  
16 you're doing because if you do we won't have any more equipment because we've been told more than  
17 once that we're going to be on our own in a short time." I don't think that's finger pointing.

18           And we talk about, I meant I heard the story about morale. We were taking contributions and  
19 buying tools and supplying them to the victims of the fire. And the local fire fighter group that fought that  
20 fire gets together and holds a pancake breakfast and raises \$11,000 and gives it to us. That tells me  
21 something. But when somebody is trying to help and somebody is pleading for help from a bureaucrat tells  
22 me airplanes can't fly but I'm watching it being filmed by aircraft, I wonder what the problem is. That  
23 man made a decision sitting 500 miles away and he was not here and he did not know and would not listen  
24 to reason. And I wonder what kind of leadership we have up there. We've got men and woman out on the,  
25 on the line that are busting their tails, sweating and working hard and dirty and soot, covered and breathing  
26 in everything that nobody else wants to breath in fighting this fire and catching a meal whenever they can  
27 and maybe a couple of winks of sleep whenever they can, they should be supported. But I don't think  
28 because those things occurred or because the deputy sheriff thought he could drop water on that and the

1 press want to know why that you can say that's finger pointing. I think what that is is asking very valid  
2 questions that need to be answered and I think that's what this Commission ought to be about is asking  
3 those questions and getting those answers. We said there were fires in Colorado, New Mexico and  
4 Arizona. We should have learned a lot from those fires. And we've had fires here. We had Laguna Fire  
5 which you're well aware of. Your familiar, we had the Pine Fire. And we were told by some that military  
6 aircraft, helicopters and such were not certified yet they can fight fires on military property, they can drop  
7 rain on the pitching deck of a destroyer out in the Atlantic or the Pacific, but they can't drop water, they can  
8 go over and fight a war in Iraq but they're not qualified to fight a fire. That brings a number of questions to  
9 mind and I say these things to you because they've been said to me by a lot of my constituents. Not one  
10 person has complained to me about the fire fighters – not one person. I've had nothing but compliments on  
11 our fire fighters and I'm here to tell you they did a hell of a job. The questions that have come up to me  
12 and been asked of me is what is wrong with these people if they won't accept anything? How come they're  
13 so stiff in their, in their regulations they can't make a decision to fit the time? Where's common sense?  
14 Where's logic? That's a good question that has to be answered. Maybe it'll be answered by this  
15 Commission. Maybe with some of the practices that go into effect it'll be such that'll say hey, you do what  
16 the situation demands and get out of the rigidity.

17 Finally, the congressman on his own asked to have the planes moved to California and they were  
18 and they were used. And I asked a member of the military, I said, "How many of those C-130's flew any  
19 missions in San Diego?" Because I saw military helicopters flying. And he said, "I'll have to check and  
20 get back to you." And the answer was zero. Now my thoughts are, gentleman, that's there's too much  
21 rigidity at the top. We're asking fire fighters on the ground to make the decision they have to make to fight  
22 that fire, to go in an area if it's safe or get out if it's not safe. You make the decision. But at the top we  
23 can't even decide to move aircraft to California and set them on the ground so they're close enough that  
24 when the weather permits we can fly them. I think those questions and those problems have to be solved  
25 because as you say this is coming up again in about 10 years and I would hate to think there's be another  
26 Commission sitting here asking the same questions, another member of the State Assembly sitting here and  
27 saying we tried to get help and we couldn't. We tried to get help and we were accused of pointing fingers  
28 when we made requests. I don't think that's right. I think those questions have to be answered.

1 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Mr. LaSuer makes a very compelling argument, gentleman. Those  
2 questions ought to be answered. I don't know if we're – I'm not sure we're prepared to answer them today,  
3 but I think that's something in which we ought to look very deeply to make sure where the breakdown was.  
4 I know in the communications problem in Riverside, we're gonna get into the interoperability  
5 communications, but this one appears to be a breakdown somewhere in the chain of command and it's the,  
6 it's certainly – we may get part of it when we have the Department of Defense testifying as it relates to the  
7 relationship between the military, between the, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the Coast Guard, the  
8 Reserves, the National Guard – did I leave anybody out? And how we operate together. And I think in  
9 there we're gonna make definite recommendations of needed for improvements. But I think one of the  
10 most frustrating things is to, to see something available and make a recommendation and then not have it  
11 used and not understand why it wasn't used. I think we, we have to answer the question eventually that not  
12 only Mr. LaSuer but others from this area have asked why we didn't. So, I'll, I'll delay the response right  
13 now because I'm not sure you have the answer, but I think as we go along before the Commission sends it's  
14 report to Governor Schwarzenegger on April 5<sup>th</sup> that we ought to have a response in that particular regard.  
15 So, Supervisor Mikels from Ventura County who was kind enough to host the meetings in Ventura a couple  
16 weeks ago. We thank you for that.

17 SUPERVISOR MIKELS: Yes. And thank you and thank Chief Roper for all the work he did on  
18 hosting – on getting me the kudos for hosting the meeting. Thank you. And, and also my fellow supervisor  
19 sitting next to me, Jim Venible (phonetic) has – almost next to me has a question as well and I think we  
20 missed the hand.

21 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Stay close to the mic, please, Judy.

22 SUPERVISOR MIKELS: You really don't want to hear this. A couple of questions and, and to, to  
23 preface the first question which I was going to ask all along. Obviously you started out by saying there  
24 needed to be more training of the public as well as the elected officials. More communication, more  
25 *education* as to what the issues are that, that are faced. And in, in listening to the assemblyman's  
26 comments there's a couple of things that I, that I know as a civilian almost pilot that could answer those  
27 questions quite easily. Why could the helicopter, why could the news helicopter fly? He's in a no fly zone,  
28 he's safely away from all of the issues that come with the fire. The updrafts and the instability of the air

1 and the turbulence and all – and the smoke and all of those things looking with a long range camera.  
2 There's a big difference between somebody flying in a no fly zone and somebody flying directly over that  
3 fire. And if nothing else, the turbulence created by the fire itself is a major issue. In the Air Force back in  
4 the '60's there was such a thing called a Fast FAC, Fast Forward Air Controller. And one of my questions  
5 is in your relationships with the military, is there a way for CDF and other fire services that have  
6 helicopters, is there a way to develop the concept of a Fast FAC with IR whatever, when you're faced with  
7 darkness maybe less visibility than, than you need? That's a sidebar. The big question is how can we –  
8 what recommendations can we make and what system can we put in place to educate the public and the  
9 policy makers ahead of time now while it's quite before the 10 or 13 years happens again on, on what are  
10 the true issues? And, and I think this is a long term type of education because I, you know, I happen to fly,  
11 I know the difference military certification, the difference between FAA certification and these are easily  
12 answered but they're perplexing to the public because the general public doesn't understand those, those  
13 differences. And I think you opened up by saying we need this education. Do you have a recommendation  
14 as how a) and who b)? With the unfortunate things that have happened in our world and now we're more  
15 worried about intrusion in our, our lives, we're doing an awful lot of terrorist planning, disaster planning,  
16 whatever. Why can't all of this be required and included in all of our disaster preparedness training i.e.  
17 terrorist preparedness training? I know our Board has done tabletop exercises where it's laid right out,  
18 what is the Board's responsibility. What are you gonna do? How are you gonna react? What's gonna be  
19 required of you? We want your bottom in right here, you know, within 24 hours and this is what you're  
20 gonna be doing. And so I would think that through SCOPE or whatever, FIREScope or CDF in the lead  
21 that you could prepare the suggested curricula if you would for this public education policy maker  
22 education and, and disaster preparedness training followed on by disaster preparedness training in a formal  
23 sense for civilians, for residents, for people who live in these areas. You know, I mean there's a certain  
24 sense of responsibility that these people must assume on their own if they choose to live in a high hazard  
25 area. You know, somebody said well we're moving more and more out into the wild lands. That's not  
26 true. This country started in the wild lands but we were smart enough to clear the area before we moved in.  
27 Well we don't do that anymore. People want to live in a different environment, but they're gonna have to  
28 accept the responsibility. So, do you have an idea, a formal plan, a something you're thinking of?

1 CHIEF WRIGHT: Let, let me try to –

2 SUPERVISOR MIKELS: That you can recommend to us.

3 CHIEF WRIGHT: Let me try to explain a few of the things there. One of the things is, is that  
4 outreach, to educate the public of, of the hazards and consequences living in those wild land areas. We, we  
5 try to use the technologies available to us and we use an extensive amount of Internet information sharing.  
6 Our website, and as much like all fire services are using nowadays, provides a lot of information for the  
7 public to access. That's, that's the, the trend of the future. So we, we load that down –

8 SUPERVISOR MIKELS: With that statement, may I interrupt you and ask you a question? Have  
9 you surveyed how many people who live in those areas actually use Internet services?

10 CHIEF WRIGHT: No.

11 SUPERVISOR MIKELS: No, uh-huh. This is one of the things we're all gonna have to be aware  
12 of. We think that's the hottest thing since sliced bread. Well, believe me, we're missing a significant  
13 amount of our population. Sorry, I'll get off my soapbox.

14 CHIEF WRIGHT: And part of the –

15 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Including the chairman who can't use a computer.

16 [Laughter.]

17 SUPERVISOR MIKELS: Sorry, I didn't mean to bring that up, sir.

18 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thanks, I appreciate that.

19 CHIEF WRIGHT: But part of that can be those that are, are not as computer literate as others and  
20 also, also the infrastructure that's available out in those rural remote areas as far as access to Internet based  
21 stuff. But we try that outreaches, inform the public of, of information that we can get to them so they can  
22 understand. As we – and I will try in my polite nature – to share with you something that I, that I have  
23 learned in my three years in Sacramento. Coming from a local government setting with the elected  
24 officials you traditionally have a longer base of institutional knowledge there. When, and what I have seen  
25 at the Sacramento level with our legislature, with the, with the coming of term limits, we have lost a lot of  
26 institutional based knowledge. Senator Campbell might remember in years past where longer terms were  
27 in place, the education, the investment that, that the agencies could invest in their legislators to educate  
28 them on the issues, the concerns, and having a work plan that they can work to do that. But in today's



1 world with those shorter term limits it's being hampered, the time available to those legislators trying to  
2 deal with all the issues that they want to accomplish while in office. There's a lot of times that, that I feel  
3 we don't get the needed time and devotion to those subject matters to make that difference. Now is that  
4 something that we can change? It needs to be addressed. But that, that's a personal, that's something,  
5 personal experience that I, I have seen in a short tour in Sacramento that I think affects us. Is that typically  
6 we're dealing with a crisis situation we don't -- unfortunately their appointments are very valuable to  
7 them, we're lucky to maybe get a half hour. And we cannot train and educate a legislator everything there  
8 is to know in fire protection in a half hour setting and maybe never see them again. And that's unfortunate.  
9 And this is a very important matter that we have. And I can only wish that those legislators had more time  
10 to do that because they are a valuable asset to us. We're here to work on these matters together and I think  
11 the time constraints on the legislators play a role in this too as far as learning about what they're dealing  
12 with. Some legislators don't have any wild land issues in their district and they could, they could care less,  
13 but those that do it's a time constraints, it's upon you. You have a lot of business to take care of and unless  
14 it's an urgent crisis that you might squeeze out a half hour for us to come talk and try to get an  
15 understanding, we feel very lucky with that.

16 SUPERVISOR MIKELS: Jim?

17 CHIEF WRIGHT: But we wished we had a stronger and more in depth institutional knowledge  
18 base in our legislator.

19 DIRECTOR TUTTLE: Quick follow on question.

20 SUPERVISOR MIKELS: Well, let, let me --

21 DIRECTOR TUTTLE: Okay.

22 SUPERVISOR MIKELS: And, and the reason I think we're spending so much time on this one is  
23 this is kind of the critical core and, and we need to understand what went on. Ventura County, my district,  
24 burned. You know, I'm running along with the rest of you. But, but I question that I have and this is with  
25 an ear to some of the policy makers that are here and everybody in this audience, this is gonna be probably  
26 not very popular, I'm gonna say it anyway, given a finite amount of money and the fact that your budget  
27 has been cut consistently, all budgets are being cut, the State isn't printing anymore, you know, we have a  
28 reality here. What would happen if the public policy were changed to say that in areas where there it could

1 safely happen, let it burn? Given the fact that a) nature does that anyway to us, and b) with the amount of  
2 area that's now being taken up with people living in it and, and structures that have to be protected, what  
3 happens if there's a public policy shift to that you know sorry, folks, we, we don't have the resources and  
4 it'll regenerate, it's nature? Would, would that be helpful? I mean, this whole room is probably saying oh,  
5 no, you know, job security. But we don't have any more money and we're gonna have to have some  
6 practical approaches to some of this stuff. Have you all thought about that and thought to push for a  
7 different public policy?

8 CHIEF WRIGHT: Well, I don't think it came to our, our forefront because our nature is to  
9 suppress all unwanted fire. That's what we're mandated to do.

10 SUPERVISOR MIKELS: Well, that's since Smokey came along. But, you know, it's a new world  
11 out there.

12 CHIEF WRIGHT: It is. And again it falls on is the public willing to accept that? What is the  
13 acceptable level of risk out there and acceptable level of loss? That's a public policy determination that has  
14 to be conveyed to the fire services is that this is the level of service adequate for California and we will  
15 accept those losses that occur.

16 DIRECTOR TUTTLE: May I add just a few, a few comments to your, to your earlier question.  
17 How do we get information out to those who have chosen to live in the wild lands. And we have been  
18 struggling with this all – everybody in the fire service, all the state foresters across the country are dealing  
19 with this same question. And, and it's hard to get your arms around it, but there are certain ways. As you  
20 know in California we have one of the best developed fire safe council networks. And typical fire safe  
21 councils are formed soon after a fire because neighbors learn about it and they don't want it to happen  
22 again. And, you know, we have many of these across the state, David Caine has been a, a strong advocate  
23 and supporter and member of his and so that is one network. Other ways we have looked at this is at the  
24 point of sale of homes; is there some way that we can have education in the escrow contract that you are  
25 living, moving into a fire hazardous area just as you have earthquake notification or so on. If the insurance,  
26 your insurance rates would reflect your clearance. That will get your attention if you're, if you're paying  
27 more. This whole idea of opening the door to a fire protection fee for CDF, that's gonna get a lot of  
28 people's attention. You'd like to be able to administer something that rewarded good behavior where you

1 paid less if, if you did your fire safe clearance. We're not quite there yet, but that is a goal to strike for.  
2 We have the fire safe, the fire alliance in California. There – we do all we can to try to get information out.  
3 It's everybody's responsibility to, you know, help, help, help do this.

4 The questions you asked about should we just let it burn. This is another very large philosophical  
5 question and you need to look at who's, who is the primary land manager. On the federal lands, on forest  
6 service lands, BLM lands, they have a very aggressive program now where they are trying to identify areas  
7 where wildfire can be used in a management sense. CDF, however, does not have the luxury. We protect  
8 private land. It is not our choice to decide oh, your land should burn. The fundamental goal of CDF is to  
9 have a very high initial attack rate – 95 percent of all fires shall be kept to 10 acres or less. And so that is  
10 what our fire protection system is based on, that's how we locate our air bases and our engine stations and  
11 our crew camps is try to keep our initial attack –

12 SUPERVISOR MIKELS: I understand that's the present practice.

13 DIRECTOR TUTTLE: Yeah. That's right.

14 SUPERVISOR MIKELS: However, have you thought about the fact that maybe this can't  
15 continue and talked to the state legislature about changing what is current policy? You know, policy can be  
16 changed and sometimes change is good.

17 DIRECTOR TUTTLE: I, I appreciate your – let, let me just say that you're asking a very  
18 important question.

19 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Can the Chairman get a word in here, ladies?

20 DIRECTOR TUTTLE: And a lot of thought has gone into this and you're asking –

21 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Andrea –

22 DIRECTOR TUTTLE: You're asking good questions.

23 CHAIR CAMPBELL: We are, we are slowly running out of time.

24 DIRECTOR TUTTLE: Sorry.

25 CHAIR CAMPBELL: You have to understand, ladies and gentlemen, politicians do two things.  
26 They point with pride or they view with alarm. That's the two major things politicians do.

27 [Laughter.]

28

1 CHAIR CAMPBELL: As it relates to this fire, we are viewing with alarm and hopefully with this  
2 report we will point with pride. But to do that we have to get all the witnesses up here today and we are,  
3 we are out of time for your segment. And so Jerry Williams, Jerry?

4 MR. WILLIAMS: I think in the interest of time I'll pass. Yeah.

5 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you, sir. I appreciate that. We are now going to the, the hour of  
6 1550 having arrived. I mean nobody, nobody says 3:50 having arrived anymore at this conference, so we'll  
7 do the 24 hour time belt. But the, we will recess for – until the hour of 1600 or 4:00. And could we try and  
8 be back in here as quickly as possible? I want to say one thing. If I had General Meyers' home phone  
9 number, I'd call him. I don't care about the fire, I want to talk about Afghanistan and Iraq. He has an  
10 unbelievable amount of information.

11 MR. VERGA: I'll pass the message on.

12 [Off the record. Short recess taken.]

13 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Assistant City Manger for the City of San Diego is going to testify. And,  
14 Mr. Ewell, I think as you begin your testimony people will be dragging back in here, so if you would begin,  
15 please. And if you'd introduce the other members if they're asked questions, I'd appreciate that.

16 MR. EWELL: Yes, sir. First of all, Senator Campbell and Members of the Commission, good  
17 afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to be here. And on behalf of the City we are privileged to  
18 participate in this Commission hearing. Joining me are Assistant Chief Auggie Gill (phonetic) of the fire  
19 department and Deputy Chief Jeff Frasier (phonetic) of the fire department. And to my immediate right is  
20 Assistant Chief William Mayhew (phonetic) of our police department. And they're here to assist in  
21 answering any questions that you may have after this presentation.

22 Now as you're aware, based on acreage the Cedar Fire represented the most significant fire in the  
23 history of California. The fire tested and stretched the local government resources including our police, fire  
24 and all other emergency and support organizations. Although the fire lasted only three days within the City  
25 of San Diego, clearly the impact on our community and our services will be with us well into the future.  
26 As you know and as you heard during the 17 day period there were a total of 32 fires in the State of  
27 California. By the time our city's fire began, there were literally no resources available to assist the city  
28 locally. This particular slide represents the beginning of the Cedar Fire but the primary point that I wanted

1 to point out here is that at the peak of the fire 6,000 acres per hour were being consumed. Based on the  
2 available information it's estimated that the fire entered the City of San Diego at approximately 6:30 a.m.  
3 on October 26<sup>th</sup>.

4 CHAIR CAMPBELL: That by the way is in the morning, right, as -- ?

5 MR. EWELL: Yes, sir.

6 CHAIR CAMPBELL: That's 0630 is the --

7 MR. EWELL: Six thirty a.m. At approximately 8:33 a.m. the first reported structure fire was  
8 reported in the city. Now during the event, each day San Diego Fire operated 50 engine companies, 11  
9 brush companies, nine trucks and two airport fire fighting companies. This represented the equivalent of  
10 approximately 500 fire fighters who were deployed each day of the fire. On two of the three days of this  
11 fire, we were down to two truck companies that were available to respond to the city and that's representing  
12 or supporting 1.3 million people within our city population. In addition to these resources, San Diego had  
13 also committed 11 engine companies to state and local mutual aid.

14 As depicted by this slide, winds from the east/northeast spread the fire its greatest distances on  
15 October 26<sup>th</sup>. We've concluded that fuel, low humidity and Santa Ana wind conditions were what greatly  
16 contributed to the spread of the fire. I'd like to just take a quick moment to publicly acknowledge the  
17 Miramar Federal Fire Fighters for their efforts during this time because they not only protected the  
18 Miramar base, but they also helped, helped, helped to protect acreages within the city itself. Mayor  
19 Murphy has already touched on the statistical data that, that occurred during this, during his opening  
20 comments, but based on countywide damage, the city represented approximately 10 percent of total acres  
21 lost and 15 percent of the structures lost. We were extremely fortunate I should say to not have lost any  
22 lives within the City of San Diego. Following the fire, the Mayor directed staff to report back to council  
23 within 30 days identifying those things that were done well and to identify those things that did not go so  
24 well and I wanted to briefly touch on some of those in each category.

25 On October 24<sup>th</sup>, the day before the Cedar Fire began, an agreement was reached by the county fire  
26 chiefs to discontinue sending strike teams out of the San Diego County area. This proved to be a wise  
27 decision in that it kept our local resources at its highest level. Before the fire entered the City of San Diego,  
28 a decision was also made to recall logistical repair and operational personnel in the event that the city

1 would be impacted by the fire that was coming in our direction, and this also proved to be extremely  
2 valuable. With no available air resources in the county, the city requested the return of Chopter 1 from San  
3 Bernardino where it was deployed after the local contract expired on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. Most importantly, our  
4 fire fighters saved over 1,600 homes in the Scripps Ranch and TR Santa communities which were valued at  
5 over half a billion dollars. The organization and implementation of 11 damaged assessment teams were  
6 critical to the rapid documentation and processing of claims for the recovery process of our impacted  
7 citizens. And equally important was the public was kept well informed of activity throughout the area  
8 based on the cooperative and coordinated effort of Mayor Murphy and Supervisor Cox and of the city  
9 leadership through the use of our local media.

10 With respect to our police department, they did an exceptional job in evacuating a large number of  
11 residents that totaled over 53,000 people in three of our affected communities. Something –

12 CHAIR CAMPBELL: A total of 53,000 evacuated?

13 MR. EWELL: That's correct, sir. Something that we were very appreciated of was the community  
14 access phone system and its volunteer staff who efficiently handled nearly 13,000 calls from the  
15 community and this obviously kept our 911 system from being completely overwhelmed.

16 So what didn't go so well? Well, there was a lack of information sharing between response  
17 agencies regarding the fire path and the spread rate. Consequently, the fire department operations center  
18 was not activated until after homes were beginning to burn within the city. And we believe that earlier  
19 activation would have improved internal communications between decision makers and facilitated an  
20 improved planning process.

21 The fire department had an insufficient number of fire officers to fill all the field incident command  
22 positions that are required for an event of this magnitude. Personnel tracking was not well documented and  
23 fortunately, while there were no significant injuries to any of our personnel, we recognize that this is an  
24 issue that we have to immediately address as well. With so many homes and other structures burning at the  
25 same time, it's been identified that our field commanders and company officers need more training on how  
26 to triage structure fires and to be more effective in identifying which of those structures can survive and  
27 which we should give up because of the extent of damage already involved. Although the city did a good  
28 job in coordinating press briefings, we've determined that we need to begin to develop an effective

1 countywide cooperative effort and plan developed for disasters involving multiple jurisdictions. An  
2 example is that in the Paradise fire in our north county area, little media attention was provided regarding  
3 those communities and the impact of those communities and as a result we later heard that family members  
4 outside the area had few updates regarding their loved ones.

5       Regarding the police department in this area, there was a lack of personal protective equipment for  
6 officers in the area of the fire and this included brush jackets and respiratory protection. San Diego police  
7 officers assisting in the county areas did not have direct communications ability with their share of  
8 counterparts and could not talk directly with fire personnel during the fire. This speaks to the need to  
9 develop a countywide multi-agency communications plan for police and fire. There are limited available  
10 talk groups between the city and county systems currently and there needs to be an effort and funding to  
11 fully integrate these systems.

12       Within San Diego, our brush management program needs to be re-established. San Diego has 230  
13 linear miles of canyon interface and brush management needs to be a high priority. We're in the process of  
14 developing our first three community emergency response teams. This program is designed to train  
15 community members to help themselves and to assist emergency responders when disasters occur that  
16 overwhelm local resources.

17       As a result of the after action report, we're working at the direction of the Mayor and council in the  
18 development of a comprehensive needs assessment that will recommend improvements in all emergency  
19 delivery systems in the city. And listed on the screen are some of those areas that are currently under  
20 review. As was stated by the previous speakers, the State of California, we believe, has one of the best  
21 systems in the world with respect to mutual aid. But as in any system it can and should be improved. The  
22 issue on the Cedar Fire was that there existed no available state or federal resources that we could access.  
23 You may not – you may or may not be aware I should say that resources from out of state were turned  
24 around because there were not – they were not ordered through the established state system. We've  
25 conducted improvements – excuse me, we've conducted improvements and we continue to realize that  
26 there needs to be improvements that, that have to be taken. The City of San Diego was alone in this  
27 particular combatting of this portion of the Cedar Fire and this needs to be addressed at the state level to  
28 establish interstate agreements and protocols that send the closest available units to significant events.

1           Although true regional consolidation of fire services may not be feasible at this particular time, we  
2 do need to improve in our ability to coordinate planning, response, training and equipment and preparation  
3 for countywide all risk scenarios. This would improve our interoperability when we are working in  
4 neighboring cities and how to encourage this cooperative effort should be of state concern. We need to also  
5 work cooperatively with the military to take advantage of their available resources during disasters. Late in  
6 the Cedar Fire Admiral Bettencourt of the United States Navy provided helicopters for use in the City of  
7 San Diego. This is being addressed currently regionally through Mayor Murphy and Supervisor Cox's task  
8 force and we are delighted to know that this is also being addressed and considered at the state level.

9           Over 70 percent of the structures lost in the Cedar Fire had wood shake shingle roofs. Yesterday,  
10 as the Mayor stated, the council approved Class A roofs citywide and it will become effective within the  
11 next two months. Our goal is to develop building codes that improve the survivability of property and  
12 residents during urban interface fires. We will study the feasibility of other building code revisions and are  
13 reporting back to the council within 90 days.

14           As we've learned from previous experiences, improved brush management gives a fire department  
15 time and opportunity to save property and lives. This recommended change goes to council on January  
16 27<sup>th</sup>. In Southern California with our urban interface, fuel load, drought, historic fire activity and threat, the  
17 State of California should review and standardize fire codes and brush management on a statewide basis.  
18 Fire has no respect for boundaries as we all know and the only way to effectively protect our communities  
19 is to universally improve our ability to construct fire safe communities. And we believe that this can be  
20 done with the proper balances so that you protect native habitats and other sensitive environmental  
21 concerns while simultaneously thinning brush so that it provides the correct safety to structures.

22           In closing, we'd like to provide you with seven recommendations for your consideration:

23           One is that training and funding should be provided by the state so local jurisdictions can develop  
24 the depth of personnel to support major incidents. The state depends on all of us to support requests for  
25 strike teams. To meet the state need and develop local capacity this training needs to be supported at the  
26 state level.

27           Number two is that technology is currently available using interoperable wireless data  
28 communication systems that can aid incident management and personnel accountability. This is an issue



1 with law enforcement, with fire, as well as with emergency medical services. We believe that the state  
2 should establish a model system in funding to help tie all California together in this effort.

3         The third is regional – is the San Diego Region needs dedicated fire rescue air support. We are the  
4 last in the line during Santa Ana conditions. Fires historically occur north of San Diego County and the  
5 seasonal state and federal resources must leave us typically at the time that the fires occur here locally.  
6 Now we've addressed this, this situation, the Mayor and council have directed us to look for ways to  
7 provide air support, but we believe that the state should also participate and assist us in this endeavor as  
8 well. It would only help protect the State of California.

9         Number four is statewide building and brush management codes need to be established. As I stated  
10 earlier, fire truly knows no boundaries and all communities with similar risks should have standardized  
11 codes that provide fire safe communities.

12         Number five, improvements to the state mutual aid system need to be addressed. Establishment of  
13 the outside of the box thinking during major emergencies which allows interstate deployment should be  
14 considered immediately.

15         Six is that the City of San Diego safely and effectively utilized Navy helicopters during the Cedar  
16 Fire. This same model should be reviewed at the state level for deployment and implementation especially  
17 when available resources are depleted.

18         And then finally all cities and counties will be impacted by the current proposed budget. This also  
19 impacts our ability to provide adequate levels of emergency services to our communities. Whatever the  
20 final state budget outcome is, we need to ensure that it does not affect our ability to safely and effectively  
21 provide emergency services to the state.

22         The Cedar Fire in the City of San Diego's perspective is behind us. Our position is to look forward  
23 and to prepare ourselves for the community so that we may improve upon our ability to prevent, respond  
24 and recover from future disasters. And we're thankful for the opportunity to come here and share with you  
25 some of our lessons. Thank you.

26         CHAIR CAMPBELL: Mr. Ewell, I want to thank you. That's one of the best presentations that  
27 we've had here. I appreciate the fact that you pointed out what worked, what didn't work, and what steps  
28

1 you are going to take to try and overcome and improve on those issues that didn't work and even improve  
2 on those that did work. It was a good presentation. Are there any questions?

3 MR. CAINE: I have a question. If I might, I'd like to know –

4 CHAIR CAMPBELL: We have a time – remember our time limit so if you would, please.

5 MR. CAINE: Yeah. First of all, I think the Chairman's right – excellent presentation. On the code  
6 revision for wood shake shingles, how did you deal with the transfer of title on property that has an existing  
7 wood shake shingle? Is there any requirement that upon transfer of title that the purchaser or the seller  
8 must change out the roofing?

9 MR. EWELL: It's a 25 year plan so I, at the end of a 25 year period that roof would be replaced  
10 and then there's percentages of the roofs over a period of time that would also allow for the replacement of  
11 the roof or a portion of the roof at I think it's 25 percent of the roof being replaced would cause it to be  
12 replaced with a Class A roof.

13 MR. CAINE: Okay.

14 MR. MURPHY: Can I interrupt here? Because what happened yesterday was while we banned  
15 all, all shake shingle roofs on new construction or on any full roof replacement, the, the proposal to require  
16 people to remove roofs at the end of 25 years did not pass the City Council for the fear of, of the hardship it  
17 might bring on people. But what we did ask staff to go back and look at was exactly what you're  
18 suggesting which is at some period to require that whenever there is a transfer of title to the property that  
19 then the wood shake roof would be replaced. That is still under consideration by the City of San Diego. It  
20 is probably a more sensitive way to mandate that at the time of sale as opposed to just going in and telling  
21 people at some point you've gotta take off your, your wood shake shingle roof. So we are, we are still  
22 actively looking at that.

23 MR. CAINE: Great. Thank you for your input. I have another question just for clarification. On  
24 the issues your, I think your last slide you had number three was dedicated indicating you wanted regional  
25 air support dedicated to San Diego and not to be depleted of fire support, and I can certainly understand  
26 your, your comment on that. However, I'm conflicted by number five which is mutual aid improvements,  
27 the need to include interstate deployment which would seem to contradict number three which says we  
28 don't want to send our aircraft up north or anywhere else, yet you want mutual aid to have interstate

1 deployment. I, I read into it that that means send 'em down here, but we don't want to send 'em up there.  
2 And then the last one on budget cuts, it might be a separate question, but you, you should, you know,  
3 should not cut safety and yet I really don't know how you define where that line might be if you have a line  
4 that you've already defined.

5 CHAIR CAMPBELL: May I answer part of that. I think what –

6 MR. CAINE: Yeah.

7 CHAIR CAMPBELL: -- he is referring to you sent equipment up to San Bernardino to save  
8 Senator Brulte's district. When the fire started in your area you were lacking help and Senator Brulte  
9 didn't send 'em back.

10 [Laughter.]

11 CHAIR CAMPBELL: And but that is, the question's a good question and it's not limited to San  
12 Diego.

13 MR. CAINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for clarifying my role.

14 [Laughter.]

15 CHAIR CAMPBELL: It is not limited to San Diego. It's one of the, it's one of the vagaries of, of  
16 mutual aid. Mutual aid is an outstanding program and works very well. Sometimes there are glitches and  
17 this was one of those glitches; nobody ever anticipated you'd have five counties on fire.

18 MR. EWELL: That's, that's true. But we believe that with protection or adding air resources  
19 locally with military support that we believe that we'd have a much better chance of providing the  
20 coverage.

21 CHAIR CAMPBELL: We're gonna get into that operation next.

22 MR. CAINE: Thank you.

23 MR. MURPHY: Mr. Chairman, can I just add one thing that --

24 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Yes, Mayor.

25 MR. MURPHY: -- everybody needs to know this. Lamont Ewell is the Assistant City Manager for  
26 the City of San Diego. It means he's the number two guy in the entire city and he oversees police and fire.  
27 But he has a unique background in that he was the fire chief of Oakland during the Oakland Hills Fire. So  
28

1 this is, this is an Assistant Manager who knows an awful lot about not only fire protection but knows a heck  
2 of a lot about wildfire.

3 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Now, Mr. Ewell, now that I know that I have a question.

4 [Laughter.]

5 MR. CAINE: Make sure you hadn't forget 'em.

6 CHAIR CAMPBELL: All the, all those recommendations that were made by the panel in what  
7 was it '92, '91 or '92 when the fire, Oakland Hills Fire or the East Bay Hills Fire or whatever they call it  
8 now, have they all been implemented and would you feel safe living in the Oakland Hills today? I, because  
9 I had somebody just flew over it a little while ago, but I want to hear your response.

10 MR. EWELL: In all candor, Senator, I would not feel safe today because they have moved away  
11 from the vegetation management that went in to place.

12 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Yeah. You're right. Thank you.

13 MR. ZAGARIS: Senator Campbell?

14 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Yes, sir.

15 MR. ZAGARIA: Just clarification. California does have interstate agreements with it's  
16 surrounding neighbors. They were actually utilized, in fact, on the morning of the 26<sup>th</sup>, we went to Nevada  
17 and requested 50 engines out of them and they did supply. In fact, that was done, really that was done  
18 around 11:00 that morning. Arizona was, was to follow afterwards. The resource was ordered up on the  
19 morning of the 27<sup>th</sup>.

20 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Okay. Members of the Commission, would you identify yourself when  
21 you, when you speak please for the record. I want to say we have an outstanding relationship with Nevada  
22 and any cooperation with Nevada is probably the best relationship that we have with any state around us.  
23 And particularly in the Tahoe area and the Sierra Mountain area we have extremely good cooperation.

24 MR. ZAGARIS: I would like to respond to that just a little bit though. Earlier on that fire there  
25 was a, a request that did not go through the official state mutual aid system and they did start several strike  
26 teams from Nevada that were turned around once it was found that they were not appropriately ordered  
27 which did delay that resource, but they were reordered again.

28

1 MR. EWELL: And that's the only point that we are making here is to get away from the  
2 procedures that are currently in place. You know, look at the, the substance of the emergency and be more  
3 flexible.

4 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you very much. Thank you, gentlemen. Our next witness will be  
5 Cahandra Wallar from the San Diego County Department of Public Works. Cahandra? Mr. Terry, you're  
6 our next witness. Are you prepared?

7 MS. WALLAR: Mr. Chairman, Members of the Commission, thank you for allowing us to be here  
8 today to give this testimony to you. I have, as we were going through different presentations, reduced my  
9 briefing notes understanding that you are under a time crunch and some of the things that I had previously  
10 planned to say were somewhat repetitive, so very quickly I will go through our portion and –

11 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you.

12 MS. WALLAR: -- give the opportunity at the end to ask any questions.

13 CHAIR CAMPBELL: We appreciate that.

14 MS. WALLAR: With my today I have our Commander Scott McClintock from the Sheriff's  
15 Department and Ralph Steinhoff (phonetic) who is our Fire Services Coordinator. I also have other  
16 technical staff with us here today that might be able to answer any specific questions that you have.  
17 Someone else that has been introduced to you but I do want to reemphasize how important he has been to  
18 the county's team is Supervisor Greg Cox. And the reason I make special note there is because Supervisor  
19 Cox was the chairman during our response portion and was at our EOC every single day many, many hours  
20 and gave a lot of elected and policy making ability to us.

21 CHAIR CAMPBELL: And he signs your check. Well, not quite.

22 MS. WALLAR: Indirectly at least. As you've heard, there were a lot of things that were in place  
23 before the firestorms occurred. We had 50 year old trees, lots of brush in the back country that were  
24 ravaged by age, draught and bark beetles so obviously we had all of the things in place that lent a fire going  
25 as this one did. I'd like to give just a brief chronology because it's important to understand when we set up  
26 our emergency operation center.

27 As you all know, the fire began on Saturday, October 25<sup>th</sup>. On Sunday the evacuations began at  
28 midnight. The fire spread very, very rapidly and the Paradise Fire started at 1:30 a.m. The Sheriff's

1 Department operations center activated at 1:45 a.m. with the county emergency operation center activating  
2 at 5:30 a.m. And I do want to make mention that there was a point during the firestorms that we thought  
3 we were going to have to evacuate the emergency operation center because the firestorms were so very  
4 close to it. Fortunately, we didn't have to do that, but we did have plans in place that we could use a  
5 backup facility and that was definitely one of the positive lessons learned here. A local emergency was  
6 proclaimed at 7:55 a.m. and modified to request presidential declaration around 9:00 a.m. At 1:30 p.m. that  
7 day, the Otay Fire started so obviously we had the three fires all running concurrently. We did provide a  
8 lot of support. As you know, we don't have fire fighters ourselves in the county, but I'm very pleased to  
9 say we did have a lot of support. Gillespie Field is owned by the county and was a staging area for CDF.  
10 Ramona is also a county owned airport and is the fire attack base that was used in this particular operation.  
11 The county EOC operations were organized using the standardized emergency management system as  
12 required by state law. We had an operation center that was staffed by the San Diego Office of Emergency  
13 Services, the sheriff, CDF's area fire coordinator, Animal Services, our Health and Human Services people,  
14 the Red Cross, utility companies, Departments of Planning and Public Works and Ags, Weights and  
15 Measures. And I think it's very important to notice the breadth of people that we had at our emergency  
16 operation center because that was very, very important to the success of our support. We also had people  
17 that provided situation status with the public safety group, documentation, and tech support was provided  
18 by the Air Pollution Control District who ensured the EOC had the latest weather, wind and air quality  
19 information. Logistics was staffed by our General Services and Purchasing people. We had finance people  
20 on site. And as I mentioned before, we had our Chief Administrative Officer and Supervisor Cox to give us  
21 policy guidance right as we needed it. There wasn't any picking up the phone and calling somebody at  
22 home; all we had to do was walk into the room immediately adjacent and we got that information and  
23 policy guidance immediately.

24         There were several things that I thought were in favor of our setting up the emergency operation  
25 center and we had conducted three functional operations and two dress rehearsals within the past 12  
26 months; that was very, very important. Everyone knew each other, knew how to coordinate, knew who to  
27 coordinate with and when. The EOC was well equipped with computers and telephones and even though  
28 we had a desire to have even more and will have more on the next emergency, we thought it functioned

1 very well. Probably the biggest thing that we had going in our favor was the county experienced  
2 emergency management staff. We'd done it, we have a staff in place, we knew what to do.

3 Lessons learned. What went well for us. We had excellent cooperation among the EOC staff  
4 despite the multitude of disciplines. Again, I mentioned them earlier. Everybody really, really talked with  
5 each other, felt very comfortable if they had a question going over and getting that information  
6 immediately. There wasn't any picking up the phone which I've heard several times people mentioning as  
7 something that went wrong. That went right for us. We had everybody that we needed right in our own  
8 center. We had executive presence. We had the use of emergency management mutual aid to augment our  
9 staff. We had GIS mapping support and that was very, very critical to knowing what the number of homes  
10 damage were, where we needed to evacuate, as I said a wonderful tool. News briefings I thought we did  
11 very well. There was several news briefings. Many of them were joint city/county news briefings and we  
12 tried as much as possible to keep everyone in the loop about what was going on. I thought we did that very  
13 well. One of the other things that we did – or actually, I shouldn't we at this point because it happened  
14 before it was a we at least from my respective area, is that a recovery manager was named before the  
15 response was even open and that actually is what I did, so I thought that was something that was very well  
16 ran. We started our recovery before fires were even out. We utilized our Building Department staff to do  
17 damage assessments. That freed up CDF staff to actually fight fires and allowed our building people to go  
18 out in those areas and do damage assessments.

19 Lessons learned for next time, what we'd like to improve. We'd like to get more timely fire  
20 information –

21 [End of Tape 2, Side A – Beginning of Tape 2, Side B]

22 MS. WALLAR: -- base. We're looking at reverse 911 and the purchase of helicopters. I think  
23 we've got a lot of things that are going forward from this that will reduce or eliminate possible fires in the  
24 future.

25 That concludes my presentation. As I mentioned, I have technical staff with me that are here to  
26 answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

27 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Once again, I want to thank you for your presentation. It was concise. You  
28 talked about the things that worked, the things that didn't work and what some of the recommendations you

1 need to improve it. One of the, one of the issues that's been clearly pointed out in all of our meetings is the  
2 lack of information to the general public. And I think as we, as we look at communications at our next  
3 meeting, one of the things we're gonna look at is how can we better inform the general public as to what's  
4 going on and what methods? Do you we use the statewide, a statewide web site, do we, do we just give  
5 information constantly to – updating, updated information to the, to the media to get that information out?  
6 These are obviously some of the things that, that concerned you and concern us. And at our next meeting,  
7 we're gonna get into that, that issue. Any questions by Members of the Commission? Senator Alpert.

8 SENATOR ALPERT: Yes. You mentioned some things about ordinances and brush, and brush  
9 clearance. Is there a brush management plan in the county?

10 MS. WALLAR: There is currently through our Multiple Species Conservation Program and also  
11 our clearing and grading ordinances, but we're looking at amendments that might be necessary to actually  
12 enhance those procedures.

13 SENATOR ALPERT: What is the, what is the distance that's required for a homeowner? What  
14 kind of clearance does a homeowner have to have?

15 MS. WALLAR: Ralph?

16 DEPT. PUBLIC WORKS REP: Under our Consolidated Fire Codes it's 100 feet.

17 SENATOR ALPERT: And then how do you actually enforce that happening?

18 DEPT. PUBLIC WORKS REP: In the unincorporated area we've got the 17 fire districts and then  
19 the area, the unserved areas so it's done by the independent fire districts and then CDF does their law  
20 enforcement 38 program within the unserved areas.

21 SENATOR ALPERT: Okay. I guess, okay, when we were in Ventura County at the last meeting  
22 they were talking about the fact that in, in their county if you don't do it, it goes on your property tax bill  
23 and if it winds up that the county has to do it, then you're charged, you know, you're charged for that and  
24 you're charged a fairly administrative fee and they were mentioning that they've had much –

25 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Exorbitant, I think is the term that they used.

26 SENATOR ALPERT: Exorbitant, actually. But they've had much greater compliance.

27 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: I don't think it's big enough.

28 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Fifty thou?



1           SENATOR ALPERT: Since that. And then also if you can comment on that. And then on the  
2 ordinances with the, with the comments that the City made, I just wondered how, what you have in place  
3 now and what you perhaps are thinking about, how that kind of compares with what's happening in the  
4 City of San Diego.

5           DEPT. PUBLIC WORKS REP: As far as roofing ordinances following the fires of '97, the  
6 unincorporated area adopted a Class A roof standard. Following the adoptions in '01 we went to the Fire  
7 Resistive Construction in High Hazard Areas. We went to the 100 foot. It was supported through CDF to  
8 help enforce the 100 foot requirements. Access was enhanced also in '01 to 24 foot as opposed to the state  
9 had it 20. So much of the issues that are in place – dual glazing was also put in place as far as our windows  
10 on our high hazard areas in '01. So much of the things that we're learning out of this fire and the other  
11 fires largely were put into place in the unincorporated area in 2001.

12           If, if I may we were charged through the Building Division before daylight on Sunday morning to  
13 initiate a damage assessment for the unincorporated area of the state responsibility lands of San Diego  
14 County. At the height of it, we had in excess of 100 Building Division Personnel conducting damage  
15 assessment which freed up fire forces to go ahead and fight the fires. Typically this is not the case in our,  
16 in our region. It's normally done by the fire forces. So this is a different approach where you have non-fire  
17 personnel working with that. We do have a copy of the final Cedar report for you. I believe you already  
18 have one, but if you don't here's another one. You also have the relational databases so that you can look  
19 at those things of roofing, windows, exterior construction, defensible space, and slope and topography  
20 which are in the CD's.

21           CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you. We appreciate that report, by the way.

22           SENATOR ALPERT: Thank you.

23           CHAIR CAMPBELL: I wanted to say one thing. One of the things in Ventura we discussed was  
24 that 100 feet might not be enough of clearing and I think, Supervisor Mikels, weren't we talking about  
25 recommendations in the 300, the clearing area of – I was saying one – the testimony we heard in Ventura  
26 was that sometimes 100 feet was not enough of a clearance and maybe you have to in certain areas go up to  
27 two to three hundred feet just to be safe.

28

1 SUPERVISOR MIKELS: Not only that, the vegetation that's allowed right up against the  
2 structure, the residential structure.

3 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Right. Yes, sir.

4 DEPT. PUBLIC WORKS REP: Mr. Chairman, thank you. Cahandra mentioned something very  
5 important, that's the county consolidated a single point of contact because even right after the fire one of  
6 the first questions we get and certainly sometimes during the fire is about recovery of costs and that's a lot  
7 of what FEMA brings to the table. And it certainly helps when we have engaged leadership in Supervisor  
8 Cox and Jacobs and having a single point of contact. And the same in the City of San Diego, Mayor  
9 Murphy and his staff consolidated the people that we were working with so we were speaking one voice to  
10 each other and it's gonna result in us within a few weeks being able to bring the claims for the City of San  
11 Diego together and, and to closure and we're making good progress Cahandra tells me on the county's  
12 claims as well, so.

13 CHAIR CAMPBELL: So it enabled FEMA to speed up it's operation.

14 DEPT. PUBLIC WORKS REP: Absolutely.

15 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Wonderful. Any other questions? Supervisor Cox.

16 SUPERVISOR COX: Again, I get the sense that the next meeting's gonna focus on  
17 communications. I won't dwell on this right now, but I think one of the things we learned in 1995, the  
18 Harmony Grove Fires, we, we had a number of fire responses within San Diego County, different fire  
19 protection district, different fire departments, and I think one of the positive things that came out of those  
20 fires was the fact that we, we made a concerted decision that our communication system was, was  
21 absolutely horrible. We had fire departments that could literally be, you know, from here to the wall over  
22 there that couldn't communicate with each other because they were on different radio frequencies, they  
23 were being patched together and actually there was instances I think where because they were being  
24 patched together there was, there was interference and there was actually transmissions from taxi cab  
25 drivers in Tijuana that were being picked up by the, the communications equipment. The San Diego  
26 County took, took the lead, worked with a lot of the fire protection districts and a lot of the cities to  
27 implement a, a regional communication system which is an 800 megahertz system which has been a  
28 quantum improvement. The City of San Diego had an earlier version of that communication system and I

1 think there's still some flaws in regards to getting those two systems compatible. I think that's one of the  
2 things that, lessons that we have learned is that we need to, to do a better job of coordinating those things.  
3 But, but even with that one of the things we found is because of the magnitude of these fires, particularly  
4 the Cedar Fire, and the multiplicity of different fire response equipment that was coming in from outside of  
5 San Diego County, from outside of the state, communications among those people was still a major, major  
6 problem and so I think those are, that's another thing that we're gonna have to be looking at, not only in  
7 San Diego County but I think on a statewide basis.

8 DEPT. PUBLIC WORKS REP: Thank you.

9 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you. Any other questions? If not, thank you all very much. We  
10 appreciate your being here today.

11 MS. WALLAR: Thank you.

12 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Our next witness is Dan Terry, the President of the California Professional  
13 Fire Fighters Association. Mr. Terry is a former county supervisor so we can feel free to pick on him if we  
14 so desire.

15 MR. TERRY: Thank you, Senator. And I was gonna say something nice about you, too.

16 CHAIR CAMPBELL: No you weren't.

17 MR. TERRY: I am happy to be here. And, yes, I am. I will tell we have many elected officials  
18 who, who are on the dais today who are clearly friends of the fire service and supporters of the fire service  
19 and for that we appreciate. But I can tell you that there, in my long experience in this business there has  
20 never been a person in the legislature that's more of a supporter of the California Fire Service than your  
21 Chairman, Bill Campbell. He is our hero then and he still continues to be our hero and we're happy about  
22 that.

23 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you.

24 MR. TERRY: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Dan Terry and I'm the  
25 President of the California Professional Fire Fighters. And I'm here representing more than 30,000 career  
26 fire fighters and paramedics in our state, some of who are with me today are the individuals representing  
27 more than the 15,000 men and women who were on the lines last year battling the devastating fires.  
28 They're here to help you see the fires from the viewpoint of those of who stood in the paths of the flames,

1 as some described it the gates of Hell. Before I turn the floor over to them, I want to offer a little  
2 perspective from someone who spent 20 years as a Captain in the Modesto Fire Department. I had the  
3 opportunity to view the fire fighting effort here in San Diego firsthand during the height of the Cedar Fire.  
4 I can tell you that in my experience I've never seen anything like this. The sheer size and the scope of the  
5 blaze was staggering. The intensity of the flames was nothing that I witnessed in my career as a fire  
6 fighter. And I saw a few big fires in my day. But for me no force of nature was as remarkable as the spirit  
7 of those men and women, three of which are with us today, on those front lines. Everywhere I went as I  
8 traveled that fire, I saw fire fighters running on nothing more than guts and adrenaline refusing to sleep,  
9 refusing to eat, refusing to think about anything except how to save one more home or one more life. They  
10 came from everywhere. From large departments like Los Angeles, like San Francisco, Orange County.  
11 And from smaller departments like the City of Davis and my own city in Modesto and the City of Novato.  
12 Individuals like Steve Rucker and the people behind me are the ones who stood the ground against this  
13 force of nature. They are also the ones who will put their lives on the line again when it happens. And we  
14 all know it will happen. I hope you will keep that in mind as you listen to their stories and then I will tell  
15 you that – and they will be brief – but we actually do have some concrete recommendation for this  
16 Commission that I'd like to present to you. First is Kelly Zombro, a Battalion Chief of California  
17 Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and a resident of the City of San Diego.

18 CHIEF ZOMBRO: Thank you very much for allowing me to speak, Mr. Chair, and Members of  
19 the Board. Again, my name is Kelly Zombro. I'm a Battalion Chief here in San Diego. I've got 20 years  
20 with the fire service. My job on the, during this fire siege was to act as the operations – in the capacity of  
21 Operation Section Chief on the Cedar Fire. I was assigned to the initial attack portion of the Cedar Fire  
22 when the fire was roughly three acres in size. The duties primarily for me were dealing with structure  
23 protection for the first 72 hours until I was relieved roughly – well about 60 hours into the fire. The Cedar  
24 Fire by far was – started at the worst possible time for obvious reasons. It was dark, it was inaccessible. It  
25 happened in the worst possible place, steep, 14-20 foot brush. Road were very difficult. The slope and  
26 terrain made it difficult to see. Hiking in wasn't an option. It began at the very beginning of a Santa Ana  
27 wind event, obviously that means we're gonna take the full brunt of this thing all the way through that  
28 Santa Ana wind event.

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It hit homes. It hit homes while people were sleeping. We knew that. And that, that weighed hard on what we were trying to do early on in that fire. The fire fighters that were out there went 72 hours plus without sleep and still did an impeccable job. Not that any loss is acceptable of life of any sort, but I'm, I'm, I'm glad we didn't lose more. And I think we did a good job of keeping those people safe and they should be commended. If a thousand fire engines had been ordered up and sent at the initial attack of this fire, they would not have been able to stop this fire. I believe that. I sat there with my forest service partners that were there. My position on the fire was sitting at the San Diego Country Estates prior to the fire hitting. I had clear view of the fire throughout the evening. I was able to see a constant ring of fire. Never did those – the perimeter of that fire ever die down. It was not very active initially, but it was still inaccessible. Most of the, most of the homes within the perimeter of the fire were saved. It was saved by a mere 500 roughly engines for some 40,000 homes. There was a lot of effort made out there by a lot of people. The – a lot of effort also placed into evacuation which by the sheriff's department and other agencies. CDF in San Diego County is fortunate. We have four people on our fire engines and we have also some municipal fire agencies, San Diego City being one and several other local agencies that have 4-0 staffing on their engines. That night we had a minimal amount of engines available to us. Because of that, whatever was on those engines became extremely critical to what we were trying to do out there, saving homes and lives and effectively evacuate people. The, the engines that were out there, especially the initial attack engines primarily were staffed at 4-0. I don't want to in any way give anybody the impression I had adequate staffing – I never had that. But I certainly had engines out there that were staffed with 4-0 and that made them very effective. Every fire fighter on every engine on every crew made a huge difference on this fire. My own personal account. Just driving through some of these neighborhoods I was able to come to homes that were – had flaming vegetation, roofs on fire, ornamental items in the backyards and so on, vegetation were on the homes that were easily suppressed by a kick of a boot or a couple of throws of water from a bucket or pond or something or pool and successfully with minimal effort within a couple of minutes we were able to save several homes. And it was not just with us, several, several agencies – I know San Diego City put together some pickup trucks and basically did the same thing. People out there made a difference and the staffing makes a tremendous difference. Four persons on a fire engine running

1 around these homes make a big difference. Three of CDF's southern units have received augmentation of  
2 resources for the last two years. Typically CDF is staffed with three people on a fire engine, but in  
3 Southern California, Riverside, San Diego and San Bernardino we've enjoyed for the last two years 4-0  
4 staffing and that has helped us tremendously. The 4-0 staffing which is four persons on a fire engine  
5 allows, has, is also – one of the other things that was given to us with the augmentation from the Governor  
6 was the four additional engines in San Diego and I know there was other engines in San Bernardino and  
7 Riverside as well. And four – we also received our helicopter down here, all of which certainly played  
8 roles in assisting with the fires that we had at that time.

9         Having seen what was going on early on in this fire and watching the engines that were out there,  
10 it's my, my estimate that they saved roughly 40 to 100 homes in the duration of the Cedar Fire. I can't give  
11 you a specific number for every single engine, but I do believe that each engine saved about that. Based  
12 upon that, I look at just, for a simple number of, of engines. With the four extra engines CDF had in  
13 theory, we managed to save roughly 160 to 400 homes depending on how you do the math on that. It's –  
14 nobody, nobody will never, ever know, but I know for a fact there's more homes occupied because of that.

15         The 4-0 staffing does more than, it increases the effectiveness of the crews. These folks are able to  
16 go in, they were able to split up the crews, it allows the captain to make decisions like splitting up the crew,  
17 two people this way, two people that way. That adds accountability, that adds a safety factor, it provides  
18 for fire fighter safety, when something goes wrong there's somebody with you to get you back out or to call  
19 for help. It's critical that, that these fire fighters have that extra staffing. And I think the other thing to look  
20 at too is we don't go out of the fire station with three-quarters of a tank of fuel or three-quarters of a hose  
21 bit of hose, but yet we're still forced to go out of our fire stations throughout most of the state with three  
22 people and an empty seat and we'd like to try and fix that.

23         The, let's see here – in San Diego we've experienced obviously as you know this fire and many  
24 others just in the last couple of years. The Vieajas Fire in 2001, Potrero Fire in 2001, the Gatlin Fire in  
25 2002 all happened outside of fire season. The Pines Fire and Cody Fire and Paradise Fires all have  
26 happened within fire season and have been devastating to this county. Southern California, in my opinion,  
27 has a year-round fire season. If there's winds, fires will burn. I think we've proven that. San Diego is  
28 unique. When we need help, it's not coming from south, east or west in most cases. It's coming from

1 north. And this fire, in my opinion, proves that when we have our fires, it's not uncommon – there are  
2 other fires burning in the state and we need to be able to stand alone a lot longer and a lot better because a  
3 lot of times we're forced to do just that. Fires burn in San Diego year-round obviously and they don't  
4 differentiate between fire season and non fire season. Where there's wind again a fire will burn. Dead  
5 brush and trees are present throughout Southern California as we all know and can burn despite rainfall. I  
6 sat and watched rain fall during the Cedar – towards the end of the Cedar Fire the day after Steve Rucker  
7 passed away and watched rain horizontally blowing through the trees while the fire stayed in the canopy of  
8 those trees and burned towards Mt. Laguna area. I never thought I'd ever see that.

9 It's my opinion that the people of California need and deserve year-round fire protection here in  
10 Southern California. Thank you.

11 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you very much, Chief.

12 ASSEMBLYMAN LaSUER: Mr. Chair?

13 MR. TERRY: I'd like to introduce Captain John Hanley from San Francisco Fire Department.

14 ASSEMBLYMAN LaSUER: Mr. Chairman, can I just interrupt for one second down here? Just  
15 something the captain said.

16 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Yes, go ahead, Mr. LaSuer.

17 ASSEMBLYMAN LaSUER: You made a comment that you didn't know that the people would  
18 ever know it. After the fire was over, I spent a lot of time working out with the fire victims. No matter  
19 where I went there were signs, "Thank you Fire Fighters," "Thank you CDF." "Fire Fighters You Saved  
20 Us." "We Love You Fire Fighters." Wherever I went in east San Diego County there were signs there and I  
21 would imagine some are still up. They may not know how many homes you saved, but they won't forget  
22 you.

23 CHIEF ZOMBRO: Thanks.

24 LT. HANLEY: Commissioners, my name is John Hanley. I'm the Lieutenant at the San Francisco  
25 Fire Department and also the President of the Fire Fighters Union. I was on a strike team. We were  
26 notified at Sunday night around 8:00 we had a ten-minute move out to meet a three other fire departments  
27 and a strike team leader in the East Bay on I-5. The strike team leader's name was Bart Lewis from Santa  
28 Rosa Fire Department. After a 14 hour drive down to San Diego, we were dispatched to the Cedar Fire.

1 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Lieutenant, would you give the make-up of a strike team for the benefit of  
2 the audience?

3 LT. HANLEY: A strike team is five engines. And you might ask why only two engines, why only  
4 two engines from San Francisco because San Francisco had dispatched five other engines to the San  
5 Bernardino fire. So there was three engines from three other separate jurisdictions which could be  
6 problematic.

7 CHAIR CAMPBELL: But each strike team is five engines.

8 LT. HANLEY: Correct. Under the leadership of Bart Lewis, we melded together. Now these are  
9 five separate engines and haven't worked together and we were able to come down to the Cedar Fire and do  
10 a fine job. I'd like to commend the Forest Service, the Division of Forestry for the State of California, the  
11 San Diego Fire Department. You folks as taxpayers got everything out of those people you could get.  
12 They did one hell of a job and you should be very happy about that.

13 CHAIR CAMPBELL: They are.

14 LT. HANLEY: And we were dispatched to numerous locations during the Cedar Fire. What – and  
15 I'd like to say is that the staffing is an issue for the fire fighters. In my district in San Francisco, we run our  
16 engines with four people. Down here we noticed that there were sometimes there was engines with three  
17 people. During this fire one of my guys got injured and I was on the, on the edge of the fire coming at us at  
18 a, at a town called – hey, Lowell, what's the name of that town?

19 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Guata.

20 LT. HANLEY: Guata. I always think Guantanamo. Guata. So I had three guys which is unusual  
21 for us so my engine is 50 yards down and I got, I got one guy on a, on a line to the left and I'm on a line to  
22 the right and I can't even correspond with my guy in the back because I can't see him. That's not how we  
23 usually work in the city. You got to have a guy in between working it. Even, even, even if we had radios it  
24 wouldn't have worked because sometimes the noise was getting so intense from the 100 foot wall of  
25 flames.

26 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Did you say whata is going on?

27 LT. HANLEY: I thought that for three straight days.

28 [Laughter.]



1 LT. HANLEY: This was not my first instance in a fire. I've been to the Oakland Hills fire. I've  
2 been to earthquakes, not the '06, but from my experience 24 years in the fire department, staffing is critical.  
3 We've heard a lot of talk today about we could do this or we could do that, if I'm on the ground which I  
4 was, I need four guys on those lines. I need one guy at the engine, a guy on each line because we spread it  
5 around the houses, and then you're gonna have the boss, whoever that may be, he's gonna walk in the  
6 middle. If this thing kicked which it by the grace of God it didn't, we would have had trouble in the district  
7 that I was in because unfortunately there wasn't 20 feet or 30 feet or there was no clearance at all. And  
8 thanks to the CDF and the Division of Forestry, we were able to secure that town with no damage at all – a  
9 success parade. So if I could leave the message to this Commission you're gonna hear a lot of, you've  
10 heard a lot of talk and essentially it's a war. That week we were at war and at war you need soldiers. And  
11 it's the men and women of the fire department on the ground that are gonna put out the fire. Thank you for  
12 your time.

13 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lieutenant.

14 MR. TERRY: Fred Burris, the Fire Captain from Ventura County Fire Department.

15 MR. BURRIS: Thank you. Thank you, Commissioners. I too am in my 24<sup>th</sup> year in the fire service  
16 and all of those have been with Ventura County working in a urban setting, suburban setting, and also in  
17 wild land. I do also have the unique privilege of working in an interagency role as a Division Supervisor  
18 and as a structure protection group supervisor on many interagency fires so I've worked with federal, state,  
19 local resources. I started out on the Piru Fire as a Division Supervisor and later on I moved to the Simi Fire  
20 I think it was October 24<sup>th</sup> as a structure protection group supervisor. And I would really like to thank the  
21 Commission for the support of the individual fire fighters and the individual efforts and would just  
22 appreciate the public support too and it's -- just take a moment to say that I do appreciate that. But in that  
23 spirit, I would like to go on to say and one of the reasons I'm here is just to communicate how important I  
24 feel it is to remember in discussion of hardware and systems and communication and aircraft how  
25 important it is, the individual efforts and I'm sure you've heard many of the stories, but well when it's dark  
26 and smoky and radios aren't working how important it is to have adequately staffed companies properly  
27 trained, properly equipped and properly lead that can make a difference.

28

1 I can speak to a few specifics. I started on the Piru Fire and I was supervising federal engines; they  
2 had five members on each, and we had some very successful perimeter control on the Piru Fire on the  
3 eastern flank. Later when I was reassigned to the Simi Fire and structure protection group, I worked in the  
4 Moorpark area and Santa Susana Knolls and later over in the Newhall Pass area. The, what I'd like to say  
5 with the staffing with the four members, in Ventura County our normal staffing is three yet on the Simi Fire  
6 because of some emergency preparedness plans the staffing was increased to four members on some of the  
7 strike teams. And I was able to see firsthand how that made a difference and, again, I do kind of bring the  
8 perspective and I have the privilege of working as an engine company officer, you know, in a single  
9 increment role and yet I also have this overhead experience so I was kind of able on the Simi Fire to see  
10 how effective it, it was. The four member, the fourth member really is a forced multiplier. It allowed me  
11 to spread the strike team – strike teams out further to cover more geography, specifically on the Santa  
12 Susana Knolls area. Fire history had showed that any time the fire had crossed 118 it was a whole new deal  
13 and no fires that had crossed the 118 had been stopped in the area where the Simi Fire stopped. And I think  
14 in large part that was due to the strike teams being in position properly staffed with the right amount of  
15 members. There were in the right place at the right time. Specifically one I was involved was a significant  
16 flare-up in the Knolls area. We had a lot of downrange embers and I was able to send or we, the strike  
17 team leader working with me, were able to send two engines to the flare-up which brought eight members  
18 where normally we'd need three members and we'd have to send three engines to bring nine. So there's  
19 the expedient benefit and that allowed the rest of the strike team to patrol the neighborhood for  
20 downrange embers which were significant and often overlooked in structure protection. The importance of  
21 having a force in place after a fire front moves through to check the attics, to check the back yards, to check  
22 the boats and the trash and everything stored around places to make sure it is secure before you move onto  
23 the next hot spot.

24 Later, over in the – I was a structure protection group over in the Newhall Pass area. Specifically it  
25 was Cal Grove and the Old Road Street with Sagecrest. It was a, it was a, an area that was kind of being  
26 lumped together called Stevenson Ranch although this neighborhood was a little older. We have quite a  
27 large area to cover, I felt, with the three strike teams we had, but we had about 20 minutes to scout the  
28 neighborhood ahead of time and we kind of developed plan where we would roll our resources through

1 there and, you know, it's a tactic, it's common, but what I appreciated was when the fire did hit, I was able  
2 to see the individual companies taken a right course of action. I saw the captains with their heads up. And  
3 when I say head up I mean if you're a company officer and you have to put your head down to help pull  
4 hose or to drag something or to make a connection on the fitting, your situational awareness goes down and  
5 your ability to maintain communication with your adjoining forces and really just to provide safety and the,  
6 you know, the lookout for your company and to be effective is reduced and it becomes very difficult. And  
7 so we were able to, we had some success there. The homes were genuinely threatened with older fuels and  
8 the homes were solved from the fuels. And then that was in a large fire mode. And that I'd like to speak to  
9 the initial attack. I had quite a few times where I've been first on scene to a brush fire in initial attack role  
10 with three members. And as a company officer, when you arrive with three members and you have, you  
11 know, you have a fire, you're kinda faced with a choice. Do I engage the fire with my fire fighter –  
12 because my, my other member is operating the pump – do I engage the fire to try to have, to turn the corner  
13 on it or do I take more of a command role and get ready to scout and look at the fire? And when you have  
14 the fourth member, it really is an expedient effect. It allows you to take action on the fire yet the officer  
15 is allowed or the initial attack IC is allowed to keep their head up, plan what they're gonna do with the  
16 other resources, look where the fire's going, and properly manage the fire. So, the ability to, again, be able  
17 to stretch the resources out – sometimes we focus on the engines, how many engines are there. Where I  
18 like to say is, you know, what is the staffing on the engines and how can we, what ground can we cover and  
19 do we need to clump them together because we need the people there or can we spread them out covering a  
20 greater distance with the same engines.

21 And I wanted to make sure I covered the points that, you know, that I originally was contacted  
22 about speaking today was, in summary, I was able to at times send two engines with eight members to do a  
23 job, flare-up, rather than three engines with nine members. It allowed me to cover more ground, spread the  
24 engines out farther as I knew the extra staffing had an expedient effect and benefit in what companies  
25 can do alone. And last, a four member company can work independent of other resources that are then a  
26 three member crew. Thank you.

27 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you.

28

1 MR. TERRY: Mr. Chairman, in conclusion, the men that you've heard from today and the  
2 thousands more who put themselves in harm's way don't like to think of themselves as heroes. They're  
3 just hard working men and women doing their jobs. But if we're to honor the sacrifice of, of men like Fire  
4 Fighter Steve Rucker we can't afford to let this study gather dust as mentioned here earlier today on a shelf  
5 in Sacramento. You know, you've heard a lot about aircraft and they're a wonderful resource. But  
6 airplanes don't put out fires alone. Fire fighters do. Lots of fire fighters with the right equipment and the  
7 right training. So on behalf of those 30,000 men and women fire fighters in California, I would like to offer  
8 the following recommendations to you.

9 Number one, a minimum of four person staffing on all California Department of Forestry and Fire  
10 Protection engine companies. I could run through the countless studies about the difference 4-0 staffing  
11 makes; many are summarized in the handout we've distributed to you. But I think it's been adequately  
12 explained here and I think that Chief Wright in his recommendations in San Bernardino was right on target  
13 when he talked about 4-0 staffing for California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection engine  
14 companies.

15 My second recommendation would be mandatory 4-0 staffing for all engine companies on all OES  
16 mutual aid engine companies. The same efficiency that makes 4-0 a top priority for CDF fire fighters  
17 applies to any crew called to handle a state emergency through mutual aid. It's not just a matter of  
18 efficiency. It's also about the safety of the fire fighters. You know, fire fighters aren't only the first on the  
19 scene of a fire, they're also the first on the scene of an earthquake or a flood or a hazmat incident or even a  
20 terrorist attack. So I think we owe these men and women nothing less than to do everything we can to keep  
21 them safe and there's no single action that contributes more to the safety of the front line fire fighter than  
22 the presence of a full crew. Now I know we live in a tough time budgetarily and I know that what's going  
23 on in Sacramento and I know what's going on in local governments around the state. So the first thing  
24 you're saying is well how do we do that? We might like to do that, but how do we do that? We can't  
25 afford it. Well, in 1993 I was involved in a statewide initiative that passed called Proposition 172. And  
26 Prop, Proposition 172 dedicated one half cent (\$.5) sales tax revenue to police and fire services in the  
27 state. We were coming out of another series economic decline and the voters chose to support that. Now  
28 let me tell you that being involved in that I can tell you that a couple of weeks before that proposal was

1 being voted on, it was down 10 points, it was going to lose, the people were not going to support it. And  
2 the Laguna Hills Fire broke out and it moved two points a day, between one and two points a day for the  
3 next 10 days and passed easily. So I think clearly the public understood that that money should and would  
4 go partially to the fire service. Well, we know that that hasn't been the case. We know that by and large  
5 that money has been allocated to police services and police protection. And I'm not here to declare war on  
6 our brothers in blue, but what I am here to suggest is that if half the growth in that revenue source could be  
7 directed towards building our fire protection services would make a meaningful impact on fire service in  
8 the State of California. Let them have the \$10 billion that they got that they've received since 1994 in these  
9 subsequent nine years, let's don't argue about that, but let's dedicate some of the growth and the sales tax  
10 that was, that was promised in Proposition 172, let's dedicate that going forward to improving the fire  
11 services in California. I think that makes sense and I think that that's something that we might receive  
12 some support from the brothers and sisters in the police services.

13 And finally, you know, I think we have an obligation as citizens to send the message to Sacramento  
14 and stop them from raiding local dollars used for fire protection to balance our state budget. You've heard  
15 that California's mutual aid system is a model for the nation – and it is. But it only works if there's enough  
16 fire fighters to answer the call. All over our state local governments are slashing fire service budgets and  
17 stations are actually being closed and fire fighters today are actually being laid off. Unless if we reverse  
18 this trend, there won't be enough fire fighters to spare the next time that disaster happens.

19 We have other recommendations in the areas of training and communication, but in the interest of  
20 time, Mr. Chairman, we will defer those to our presentation before the Commission in two weeks. I  
21 appreciate your time, I appreciate your interest, I hope that we have afforded this Commission with at least  
22 some possible solutions to the critical problems we face in California fire service. Thank you, Mr.  
23 Chairman.

24 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Mr. Terry, thank you very much. And thank you, gentlemen. We  
25 appreciate – you have made a very good defense of four persons per engine.

26 MR. TERRY: Okay.

27 CHAIR CAMPBELL: So thank you for being here today.

28 SUPERVISOR MIKELS: Mr. Chairman?

1 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Oh, excuse me. Questions? Supervisor –

2 SUPERVISOR MIKELS: Not, not necessarily a question, but you've heard me allude to the fact  
3 that my District is Simi Valley/Moorpark.

4 CHAIR CAMPBELL: A little closer to the mic, please.

5 SUPERVISOR MIKELS: Santa Susana Knolls. And I, I had made the comment when he was  
6 talking about it that if they had not had the capability to stop that fire when they did, and I'll be there were  
7 a whole bunch of hearts in a whole bunch of throats when that puppy jumped because it would have gone  
8 all the way to Malibu. Now, the Santa Susana Knolls is an area that's very, very old, basically it was sold  
9 on the back of cereal packages a bazillion years ago. There were old cabins, the streets are narrow, they're  
10 unmarked, they're, they're obstructed just getting the engines back there. And this is one time that I can  
11 guarantee having that capability and having those four man teams made a tremendous, tremendous  
12 difference. When I flew the fire line with our Chief and he showed me what happened, it could have been  
13 just an unmitigatable disaster. And so from a, from a up close and personal perspective I wanted to back up  
14 what they were saying. Now I don't know if absolutely every engine can have four people given our  
15 problems –

16 MR. TERRY: It can.

17 SUPERVISOR MIKELS: It can if we steal – not steal – if we take the 172. I supported 172 in our  
18 county heavily. I signed the local initiative and I – to this audience I'm speaking to the choir but just very  
19 quickly the people that were out working 172 were the fire fighters in uniform. And it was on – in our  
20 county it was on the heels of the Green Meadow Fires. And you didn't see that many sheriffs or deputy  
21 D.A.'s or whoever out there; you saw the fire fighters out there in the malls, walking the districts, et cetera.  
22 So I think there is a very sound argument for at least the growth in 172 because it's my feeling that a) the  
23 public meant that 100 percent for public safety, that's the way it was sold, it wasn't meant to go to county  
24 services. Even if that was the initiation, it was sold to the public on public safety and it was sold by fire  
25 fighters and so I do personally believe that there is merit in that discussion. Now, that I think has to be  
26 handled locally now, but I would urge this Commission to think about making that as a recommendation.

27 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you very much.  
28

1 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman, I have, I have one question real quick. If you  
2 have to choose between a strike team based on three men per engine or a strike team that cannot be made  
3 up of five engines because you don't have adequate men? Would you prefer to have four men per engine  
4 or a new engine?

5 MR. TERRY: Four men per engine, no question about it.

6 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Even though it might be only four engines that you can put  
7 together.

8 MR. TERRY: No question about it.

9 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Okay. Thank you.

10 CHAIR CAMPBELL: If it was only four engines it wouldn't be a strike team.

11 MR. TERRY: Right.

12 CHAIR CAMPBELL: It'd be 80 percent of a strike team.

13 MR. TERRY: That's right.

14 CHAIR CAMPBELL: I thank you all –

15 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Okay. Mr. Chairman?

16 CHAIR CAMPBELL: We've got to move along, ladies and gentlemen.

17 CHIEF PRATHER: Mr. Chairman? (Unintelligible) real quick.

18 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Oh, I'm sorry.

19 CHIEF PRATHER: Chip Prather, Orange County Fire.

20 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Sure, Chief, go ahead.

21 CHIEF PRATHER: I'd like to just add to Mr. Terry's comments on Proposition 172 and ask the  
22 Commission to seriously consider that.

23 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Yes, go ahead. I'm sorry. I didn't, I didn't –

24 CHIEF PRATHER: We are presently in discussions with our county on that and just to give the  
25 Commission some idea of what kind of money we're talking about, our county has received \$1.8 billion in  
26 the 10 years that Proposition 172 has been in effect. What Mr. Terry's talking about is the growth – money  
27 that isn't there yet, no new taxes. Many of the recommendations this Commission is going to be  
28

1 considering are going to come with a bill attached. This could be a way to fund some of those things  
2 including the staffing which I also support.

3 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you. I appreciate that having a daughter and five grandchildren who  
4 live in Orange County. I want to make sure you take very good care of them.

5 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Senator Campbell? Senator Campbell?

6 CHAIR CAMPBELL: If they don't live in – Go ahead, Chief Coleman.

7 CHIEF COLEMAN: I'd just like to add one little – Chief Coleman, Santa Rosa. First off, John,  
8 Bart Lewis says hello. Second thing I wanted to add is kind of a factoid to what was presented by President  
9 Terry. And that is that when those funds come back down, they don't go back down to local government.  
10 They go to counties. They don't go to the local government area. And as working on the last five years  
11 and looking at various allocations in funding distributions around the state, it's really interesting to note  
12 that something only like two counties in the whole state have actually redistributed money for purposes of  
13 fire. So if you take the, that 10 years of experience that Chief Prather just referred, the fire service has got a  
14 lot of catching up to do.

15 CHIEF TERRY: Yeah, we just recently received an AG opinion that said it was as simple as –  
16 because there was some argument about that – it was simple as a three-two vote of any Board of  
17 Supervisors in the state and that allocation can change. Thank you, Chief Coleman.

18 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you all very much.

19 LT. HANLEY: Senator, I might add whatever you decide to do down here will affect us in  
20 Northern California because we could very well be next. Thank you.

21 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Yes, sir. Thank you. Dallas Jones, Director of the Office of Emergency  
22 Services. Oh, there he is.

23 MR. JONES: Mr. Chairman and Honorable Commissioners, I'll be very brief and I do not have a  
24 slide presentation, but I do have some information I'd like to impart upon you. As you know, OES is  
25 required to complete an after action report at a minimum any time the Governor declares an emergency in  
26 the State of California. And quote, "It'll be a review of the response actions taken, application of  
27 standardized emergency management system, suggested modifications to SEMS, necessary modifications  
28 to plans and procedures, identify training needs and recovery activities to date." Since OES and the Blue



1 Ribbon Commission both have similar charges and to rely on much of the same information, in an effort to  
2 coordinate and not duplicate the work of the Blue Ribbon Commission, OES has established a process that  
3 allows a broad group of concerned stakeholders an opportunity for input into both the after action reporting  
4 process and your Commission. Our goal is to provide the broadest and most inclusive process for input in  
5 the entire process, therefore we're using multiple methods for information gathering. The intent is to  
6 provide local government leaders, emergency managers, fire, law, EMS, et cetera to provide comments into  
7 this process. The recommendations of the stakeholders has an understanding of the successes and  
8 suggested needs that need improvement. This, we believe, will allow California to better prepare, respond  
9 and recover for future events. In addition to SEMS, the input focuses on all aspects of the response  
10 recovery and training. State agencies are being requested to use our after action reporting system which is  
11 automated, resource information management system for supplemental correspondence and one-on-one  
12 contacts with OES personnel regarding the issues and recommendations that they may have. We've  
13 established an external coordinating committee to ensure that we get a very broad support for the  
14 Commission recommendations. OES is also chairing a meeting on February 2<sup>nd</sup> – or excuse me, February  
15 3<sup>rd</sup> with an external group of stakeholders to get additional input on the issues for the after action report and  
16 additionally for submission to your Commission. This will include CFEA, CPF, the fire safe councils, the  
17 fire alliances, city and county planners, insurance professionals, the Firewise Community Organizations  
18 and of course FIRESCOPE. After this efforts, we will complete the report and provide a summary of the  
19 findings and recommendations to your Commission. An executive summary will also follow. Also in  
20 support of your deliberations our fire and rescue advisory committee, FIRESCOPE, their Board of  
21 Directors met on January 8<sup>th</sup> to receive input and recommendations from fire chiefs throughout the State of  
22 California and from any of the impacted agencies throughout the mutual aid system. Because clearly  
23 agencies in northern part of California who did not necessarily have fires in their jurisdictions, certainly  
24 have a contribution we believe into a systemic review of the operations. So that'll be made available  
25 through the FIRESCOPE operations and deliberations. They'll be looking at mutual aid, ICS, the MACC,  
26 Multi-Agency Coordination Center, communications and safety. Not to duplicate, to make sure that we get  
27 input from throughout the state so you can have better, I think, deliberations and recommendations.

28

1           The Board also met this morning to review some of the executive summary and some of the  
2 information they've received already. That information will be inputted into your Commission. In  
3 addition, currently the registration was this morning, there's been a wildfire summit held here in San Diego.  
4 This is the second year and this is bringing agencies from all over the United States discussing wildfire  
5 communications problems, interface, codes and ordinances and a variety of issues that we believe directly  
6 impact upon your deliberations. We will taking the results of those summits and the conversations that  
7 occur and also inputting them into your Commission for deliberations.

8           I know time is brief. That's kind of a major overview. We believe the best thing we can be doing  
9 at OES is supporting fully your deliberations including our after action reporting into your process so that  
10 we have one fine recommendation to go to both the Governor and our state legislature. Thank you.

11           CHAIR CAMPBELL: Mr. Jones, thank – we want to thank you for the support for this  
12 Commission your office is providing all the staff support on this Commission and we're grateful for your  
13 help and assistance.

14           MR. JONES: It's our pleasure. And the Governor is very engaged in your deliberations. We brief  
15 him and his staff as we go along throughout this process so he's also looking forward to your  
16 recommendations. Thank you.

17           CHAIR CAMPBELL: Yes, he is. Thank you very much. I want to also thank you, you mentioned  
18 the folks from the Wildfire –

19           [End of Tape 2, Side B – Beginning of Tape 3, Side A]

20           CHAIR CAMPBELL: -- for their help and assistance. We're going to, as it's listed on the agenda,  
21 we're gonna change and go to the California National Guard, Colonel Davis and Colonel Crocker. They  
22 were in Ventura and they were kind enough to come back down here again today. And we're gonna have  
23 them set up the, the situation to bring on the Defense Department to testify as to the federal relationships.

24           UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman?

25           CHAIR CAMPBELL: Now I want to say – excuse me, before that. For any of you in the public  
26 who have signed up to testify, please be assured that you will have the opportunity to testify. I will be here  
27 and we will take your testimony and it will be part of the official record of this Commission. So you will  
28 be heard, it's running a little late, I apologize. Go ahead, Colonel.

1 COL. DAVIS: Mr. Chairman, Members of the Panel, thank you for having us here.

2 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Colonel, you were a member of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division, weren't you?

3 COL. DAVIS: Airborne.

4 CHAIR CAMPBELL: I want to congratulate you.

5 COL. DAVIS: Yes, sir. You just set the, you just set that up so that you could say you were too.

6 [Laughter.]

7 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Yes, I know it. It was many pounds ago.

8 COL. DAVIS: Sir, and we appreciate your service and the Members of the Committee as well.

9 I'm Colonel Jeff Davis, I'm the Director of Operations for the Military Department of California. To my  
10 left is Col. John Crocker who is the Operations Officer for the Air National Guard. We are out of order.  
11 We were going to be last and Tom LaCrosse, my friend from the Pentagon is coming up next, so while we  
12 are in, probably in total agreement, I do request the opportunity to rebut anything that Tom may say. We  
13 did testify previously so rather than waste your time, that's in the record. What I would like to say is the  
14 California National Guard was committed in support of the fires. As we always are with a request that  
15 went to OES and then we get the mission and then we move. I am proud to say that we flew some 647  
16 sorties, that's single each aircraft as a sortie. And for our friends in San Diego, 537 of those sorties were  
17 down here on your two fires and that's 83 percent of our support was to your fires.

18 Previous speakers have addressed a number of things and I think what I can do –

19 CHAIR CAMPBELL: What equipment do you fly, Colonel?

20 COL. DAVIS: Well, we flew principally Black Hawks and Shinooks. We also had the C130-J  
21 models and probably an H model which flew the MAFFS the Module Airborne Fire Fighting Systems. In  
22 that regard, I will tell you that we also brought in support from the Nevada, from Oregon. We also brought  
23 in support from Colorado, from Wyoming, and from North Carolina. So it was a, it was a, it was a  
24 composite force that participated.

25 I think I could best support you by perhaps commenting on some of the previous speakers remarks  
26 today. Director Tuttle talked about the need for resolution of federal military resources and, and I think it's  
27 important that we do that not only from a city and county standpoint, but also from a state and also from the  
28 standpoint of the federal government. And I would just offer this suggestion: one of the things that you

1 consider when you take a look at the relative merits of the using reserve component forces – I’m not talking  
2 about the Guard because you’ve got the Guard; as long as we’re in the state, you’ve got the Guard. But in  
3 terms of relative merits of using reserve component forces are using the active component, take a look at  
4 what’s going on real world now. The operational tempo of active forces in particular is extremely high, we  
5 know that; it is also for the reserve components. In the case of an active unit, you’re going to get young  
6 men and women who are going to be in there for two years, three years, four years. They will probably  
7 have a deployment during that period of time and they’re going to go back, when they come back they’re  
8 gonna go off to Norfolk or Okinawa or they next duty station. Whereas in the case of your reserve  
9 components, they’re gonna come back to our state. They are Californians, they live here, they work here,  
10 their homes are here and so take a look how you can maximize the value of the dollars spent on their  
11 training. For example, in the National Guard we have pilots that have flown missions 10 to 12 years in  
12 support of the fire fighting efforts. So, if you’re going to, if it becomes a dollar issue, at least take a look at  
13 those reserve units because we may get more bang for the buck. Of course, we’ve talked about aviation,  
14 but there are also engineering units, there are truck units and others and of course we all recognize that.

15         Two of previous speakers talked about the lack of knowledge of where the fire was at a particular  
16 time and what I will refer to is the lack of a common operating picture in command post of various  
17 agencies at particular times in the fire. That’s reality. However, we can fix that. It is not difficult. The  
18 National Guard, for example, in the last year we’ve created a mechanism where all we have to do is give  
19 any of our commanders up and down the state access to our website and they’ve got real time information  
20 right now. For example, one of the things that we pull in there real time information are the camera  
21 pictures that Caltrans provides of intersections in various cities in our state. Now if we can do that, we can  
22 do the same, same thing where it’s a satellite downlink, whether it’s information from a, a remotely  
23 unmanned vehicle in the air or from a real aircraft. And unless it’s a satellite that was put back – put up in  
24 a rocket it is not rocket science. We know how to do this. We just brain it in on the Internet, we brain it in  
25 to targeted command posts on the Internet or if it’s a public need, we brain it in a community television so  
26 the whole community can get the picture. It is not difficult and I would suggest that we at least consider  
27 that.

28

1 I think probably in the interest of your time we'll just, we'll, we'll just conclude with that. We are  
2 in support of – we'll continue to be in support as long as we're here. Units are gonna go in and out, you  
3 know we've had a lot of units in and out over the last few years, last couple years, we're gonna continue to  
4 do that, but as long as we're here we're here to support you. And I'll just conclude there and say if there  
5 are any questions, we'll be glad to answer them.

6 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Colonel, thank you very much. Any questions by Members of the  
7 Commission? If not, thank you very much. We may – oops, oh, I'm sorry.

8 COL. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

9 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Congresswoman Davis.

10 CONGRESSWOMAN DAVIS: Thank you, Senator. And perhaps we'll just follow up with the  
11 next group as well, but what, what are you really lacking to move forward to do that today? What would –  
12 I mean you obviously ran the Sorties, the training was there. What – we've heard that folks weren't  
13 necessarily ready, prepared round the clock able to do this. What, what was missing from your point of  
14 view?

15 COL. DAVIS: Well, thank you. I'm glad to respond to that. We were, if you're talking  
16 specifically about the aircraft we have and used I'll be glad to answer that. If you'd like to talk about the,  
17 the ability to brain in downlinked information, I'd like to pass that to John Crocker if that's okay also. In  
18 terms of our aircraft, we really had not shortfalls. We deployed really within just a few hours after we got  
19 the mission. The only problem we had was that most of our Chinooks, the big heavy lift helicopters were  
20 just back from Iraq. And I can't remember right now whether they were still being unwrapped or not, but  
21 they had to go through a long maintenance process. They had been in Iraq and in fact we continue to give  
22 daily reports during the period that they were gone as to the status of the aircraft in, in, in, in California.  
23 That's real world. Ninety-five – as you know, Congresswoman, 95 percent of our money comes from the  
24 federal government and it is primarily for federal missions so those aircraft were gone, but as soon as they  
25 got back we started braining them up. We're gonna have to go through a long maintenance process to brain  
26 them back up as you might imagine because the priority of, of support to fix aircraft around the Army is  
27 going overseas. But we feel comfortable right now that with what we've got in the state and with what we  
28 can get from adjacent states that we would continue to be able to support the mission.

1 I'd like to pass this to John in terms technology and downlinking information directly into --. Yes,  
2 ma'am?

3 CONGRESSWOMAN DAVIS: Okay. Can you just follow-up one -- ? When -- what order did  
4 you get and where did that come from and at what point in the fires?

5 COL. DAVIS: What order did we get? The order that we got to, to deploy came from the Office  
6 of Emergency Services. That's our standard protocol. We are not allowed -- unless it's an absolute  
7 emergency life or death situation, the military commander doesn't deploy his forces on his own. He could,  
8 but the normal protocol is it comes from OES and it comes fairly quickly. As soon as CDF decides they  
9 need us, OES calls us and within 24 hours we've got somebody there.

10 CONGRESSWOMAN DAVIS: Okay. Thank you.

11 COL. DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

12 COL. CROCKER: I'll just, I'll just sag way on that since I was actually in the command post on  
13 that particular Saturday night. We got the call from OES and immediately eight helicopters were ordered  
14 through the Army and the two MAFFS aircrafts were ordered the Air National Guard. All of those aircraft  
15 were available Sunday by noon including the contractor that had to supply the fuzz jack, et cetera that goes  
16 in the aircraft. So the response air was actually fairly quick. They were ready to fly on Sunday afternoon.  
17 In addition, we actually moved a helicopter that was not capable of fighting fires down to Southern  
18 California in anticipation of VIP's quite sincerely needing to view the fire lines, et cetera. So there was a  
19 fairly rapid response by the National Guard in that.

20 With regard to the technology for command and control, that, that will take some development  
21 actually. It is physically possible, but I think it is an important subject. I, I made a note to myself here that  
22 we, we only tried at 110 percent level to get some unmanned aerial vehicle that could have long sustained  
23 hours of flight. We won't make that mistake again next time; we'll give it 200 percent and make absolutely  
24 certain that this happens. And, by the way, we have quite a bit of support in that, in that venue. The fact of  
25 the matter is that just listening today it's obvious that fire fighters are somewhat blind at night. They can't,  
26 they can't tell. And even in the daytime they're somewhat blind to what's happening. Even, even a fighter  
27 guy can figure out that that's a problem. Command and control and communication are always the  
28 problem in, in combat or any other stressful circumstance. So our hope is to utilize all available assets and

1 certainly Predator was one of them although it has created some consternation. It is an excellent source as  
2 well as others that around the state to build a picture that in major events can supply the incident  
3 commanders all the way up, from, from the guy on the fire line right through to the guy who has to figure  
4 out where all the assets go.

5 CHAIR CAMPBELL: We don't want to take any of them away from Iraq though.

6 COL. CROCKER: No. And, and clearly we wouldn't do that. But –

7 CHAIR CAMPBELL: But they are a great, a great vehicle.

8 COL. CROCKER: And the output of them is command and control.

9 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Particularly at night. And what you're getting to is the issue that right now  
10 the fire department, the fire personnel can't, can't see what's going on, where the fire's burning. And so  
11 but if you have a Predator up there with infrared and you can, you can follow that what – like you can't do  
12 now. You can follow where that fire is going, how hot it's burning, what's happening, everything around it  
13 and so when dawn comes you'll be prepared to move.

14 COL. CROCKER: Absolutely.

15 CHAIR CAMPBELL: And take, take action. So these are things that we're gonna, we're gonna  
16 talk a little bit more about that with the Department of Defense. But, but also we're gonna look at some  
17 other technology at the, at the meeting in Riverside on February 7<sup>th</sup>.

18 COL. DAVIS: In conclusion, I would just like to take on something that John said. He said major  
19 events and I determined that in my mind to mean more than just fires because –

20 COL. CROCKER: Right.

21 COL. DAVIS: -- there is the capability on the war on terrorism whether it is maritime support or  
22 surveillance, whether it is supporting the Navy or the Coast Guard and their counter drug efforts off the  
23 coast or whether it's surveying the ports if we have to. There is the capability and I think that debate needs  
24 to go.

25 Sir, in conclusion, that concludes our remarks except that I see Kim – my friend Kim Zagaris over  
26 there about to ping me on something.

27 CHIEF ZAGARIS: No, thanks, Col. Davis. I think not just nighttime but in smoky conditions it  
28 has applications during a major hazmat issue in which we can fly aircraft up into that area. So it actually

1 has several more applications that are worth looking at that overall for an all risk application, whether it be  
2 fire or law enforcement just in the public safety arena, flood, there are several other issues. It has a great  
3 application or at least a tool does whether we use a Drone or, or some other means.

4 CHAIR CAMPBELL: And also we can take out, take out a couple people we don't like at the  
5 same time, sir, right.

6 [Laughter.]

7 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: Whoa.

8 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Alright.

9 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE SPEAKER: Don't say that. Oh.

10 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank, thank you very much, Colonels, we appreciate it. We have  
11 Assistant Secretary of Defense Peter Vega here for – and also Colonel Thomas LaCrosse from the Army  
12 Director of Civil Support, and that's it.

13 SECRETARY VERGA: Thank you

14 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Secretary Vega, thank you for being here today.

15 SECRETARY VERGA: Thank yo, Mr. Chairman, and fellow Commissioners. I appreciate the  
16 opportunity to, to address the group. In the interest of time, I will keep my remarks very short and Col.  
17 LaCrosse is gonna go through a briefing on how the process for providing support to civil authorities from  
18 the United States Military works. But I would ask you to keep in mind as you look at this presentation that  
19 the role and mission of the United States Department of Defense is, in fact, the military defense of our  
20 country. That's what we're organized, trained and equipped to do. We do have a longstanding tradition  
21 going back to the founding of our nation of providing support to civil authorities and we have a well  
22 organized and well ordered process by which we can support other lead, excuse me, lead federal agencies  
23 when it comes time to that. After Col. LaCrosse's briefing, we'll be happy to answer any questions that  
24 you might have.

25 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you very much. Colonel LaCrosse.

26 COL. LaCROSSE: Mr. Chairman, distinguished Commissioners. I'm not sure this is on. Next  
27 slide, please. This is the agenda that I'd like to follow and in the interest of time I'm gonna speed along  
28 with my remarks. I've been asked to talk about the process by which the Department of Defense gets



1 involved in providing support to civil authorities. I've also been asked to talk about the Economy Act and  
2 Title 32 of the United States Code.

3       Next slide, please. The Department of Defense provides support to civil authorities for a great  
4 number of things. Some of these are weather or nature related like hurricanes and floods. Others are  
5 emergencies that involve some human intervention or cause like civil disturbance or hazardous material  
6 incidents. The third category are those things which the DOD has some unique capability that is used to  
7 augment assets of civilian authorities. Much of this support can be planned in advance. Things like  
8 supporting the safety and security of a national special security event or our support to the counter drug  
9 operations would fall into this third category.

10       Next slide, please. Whenever any of those things occur, the local military commander or the  
11 responsible official of a Department of Defense agency may provide immediate response to save lives,  
12 prevent human suffering or to mitigate great property damage. We call this immediate response. It's part of  
13 being a good neighbor to those communities surrounding our posts, camps, bases and installations. This is  
14 done on a temporary basis. If DOD support is required for an extended period, civilian officials should go  
15 through the appropriate requesting channels to obtain DOD support.

16       Next slide. What follows is a review to many of the Commissioners. I'm a military police officer  
17 like Jeff Davis so I've tried to keep this simple using cartoons so the uninformed can understand.  
18 Regardless of the cause of the incident, natural or manmade, the response is similar. For the purpose of this  
19 briefing, I'm going to call the location of the incident the disaster site.

20       Next slide. As you know, local police, fire and EMS are the first to respond based on their own  
21 protocols and an incident commander is identified. Mutual aid with surrounding communities is also quick  
22 to respond. As you can see, the local emergency management office is involved.

23       Next slide. As more is known at the disaster site, it becomes evident that the local responders will  
24 need additional assets to control the event. The local emergency manager working with state emergency  
25 managers can bring other state assets into the mix. This includes state police and highway patrol as well as  
26 the National Guard on state active duty. It'll also see assets from other states providing support through  
27 interstate compacts like the Southwest Governor's Compact. Federal authorities are gaining situational  
28 awareness of the incident and may be involved in information gathering and sharing. If the local and state

1 response capabilities are overwhelmed or the nature of the event is such that specialized equipment or  
2 personnel only available at the federal level are required, the federal response will be provided to support  
3 the local incident commander. The Department of Homeland Security coordinates the federal response for  
4 all hazard consequence management. The National Interagency Fire Center coordinates the use of fire –  
5 federal fire fighting resources. The Department of Defense is a federal partner to both of these federal  
6 agencies.

7       Next slide. Under the federal response plan and the initial national response plan, resources  
8 provided by the federal government are grouped into 12 emergency support functions. The Department of  
9 Defense is the lead federal agency for only one of these emergency support functions, ESF III, Public  
10 Works and Engineering that's restoring essential public services and facilities and for that we use the U.S.  
11 Army Corp of Engineers. DOD supports each of the other 11 ESF's including ESF IV which is fire  
12 fighting, detecting and suppressing wild land, rural and urban fires. The lead agency for that is the  
13 Department of Agriculture through the U.S. Forest Service.

14       Next slide, please. Wild land fires do not respect jurisdictional boundaries. No single federal ,  
15 state, local, tribal or voluntary agency alone can handle all the wild land fires that may occur in it's  
16 jurisdiction. The National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho is the nation's support center for wild  
17 land fire fighting. It's made up of many different agencies and these agencies work together to exchange  
18 support, protection responsibilities, information, training and provides an effective method for protecting  
19 lives, property and natural resources. When NIFC needs help, the request for assistance is sent to the  
20 Department. We evaluate the request based on a number of criteria and once approval is – once the request  
21 is personally approved by the Secretary of Defense, orders are given to the commanders, services, or DOD  
22 agencies that have the capability to provide that assistance. While this may appear bureaucratic, the system  
23 is effective and when necessary can respond in very short order. As an example, during the California fires  
24 some requests for DOD support were personally approved by the Secretary of Defense within two hours  
25 after receipt of the request.

26       Next slide. Here's a list of what the Department provided during the 2003 fire season. Much of  
27 what was provided as, as Jeff mentioned was from the National Guard. You can see besides the California  
28

1 fires which you're all familiar with, DOD also provided support for fires in Montana during the month of  
2 August.

3 Next slide. Historically you can see the magnitude of the support that DOD has provided over the  
4 years. As you look at this slide, keep in mind how the world has changed since 1988. The active duty  
5 military is significantly smaller. In 1988, we had a total of 18 Army divisions. We now have 10. Four of  
6 those are permanently located outside of the continental United States, and as you know we are decisively  
7 engaged in military operations outside of the United States. Between January and March of 2004, eight of  
8 those 10 divisions will be moving to or from their home location.

9 Next slide, please. When DOD provides support, this is what we bring. This is the MAFFS. The  
10 Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System. Keep in mind that what we have are the airframes, the C-130  
11 aircraft and the trained and certified crews to conduct air operations. The actual MAFFS, the guts inside  
12 the plane, belong to the U.S. Forest Service. These units are appropriately placed in the National Guard  
13 and the Air Force Reserve. Geographically, you can see there are two each in California, Colorado,  
14 Wyoming and North Carolina. Under normal circumstances, they can be deployed from home station  
15 within 24 hours of receipt of orders.

16 Next slide. The Department has a variety of rotary wing aviation. There are some who have the  
17 mission to fight fires and that develop on our installations and ranges and they do keep crews and  
18 equipment ready to go. However, not every helicopter and crew can conduct fire fighting water drops.  
19 They need specialized equipment and training. Even those units that may have this mission on our  
20 installations may not be certified by local and state officials to conduct the same mission off of our  
21 reservations.

22 Next slide, please. The Department of Defense has very few active duty military fire fighters.  
23 Most of those we do have are either deployed overseas are specially trained and equipped for aviation or  
24 ship type fires. Most of our installation fire houses are staffed with civilian crews. What we do have an  
25 provide when necessary are healthy, physically fit individuals who are used to working in an austere  
26 environment. They are organized and used to working in small groups and know how to follow directions  
27 and orders. Given the proper equipment, training and supervision, they become Type II fire fighters.  
28 When we deploy a battalion of 500 fire fighters we make sure that they have the proper command and

1 control and the medical assets to care for their wellbeing. From receipt of orders to actual deployment to  
2 the fire line takes about a week.

3 Next slide, please. When asked, DOD has provided other support to NIFC for wild land fire  
4 fighting. Again, DOD is not the normal agency that NIFC goes to for this support; we usually get involved  
5 when other capabilities are exhausted or not readily available. I must also emphasize that because of  
6 worldwide commitments, defense resources from your home area may not be available for fire fighting or  
7 other emergency support functions.

8 Next slide. The Economy Act is often cited and discussed but rarely understood. The Act provides  
9 federal agencies the authority to obtain supplies and services from other federal agencies on a reimbursable  
10 basis. The Act had its genesis during the Great Depression. Congress was looking for ways to curtail the  
11 expense of government. It passed the Economy Act in 1932 to obtain economies by deleting duplication  
12 and overlapping activities within the federal government. Congress amended the Act in 1942 to allow the  
13 military services to contract with other federal agencies. Each Economy Act order is supported by a  
14 determination and finding statement that states the use of the interagency acquisition is in the best interest  
15 of the government and that the supplies and services cannot be obtained as conveniently or economically  
16 by contracting directly with private sources. We do not view this legislation as a limiting law, but rather as  
17 an enabling law which allows DOD to support other federal agencies.

18 Next slide. Mr. Chairman, prior to engaging in a discussion on Title 32 of the United States Code,  
19 I think it's appropriate to talk about the National Guard and the various ways they can be employed. The  
20 increasing use of the National Guard along the full spectrum of contingencies from peace time domestic  
21 support operations to early deployments during contingencies to protect – protracted engagements is the  
22 fundamental basis of our national military strategy and has been fully tested throughout our history. The  
23 National Guard soldier and airman has the potential to serve in a dual status. On a non-federal status in the  
24 capacity National Guard units comprise 54 separate armies and air forces under the command and control  
25 of the Governor and the state (unintelligible) general. They perform duties as authorized by state law such  
26 as responding to local emergencies or natural disasters. They are paid for with state funds on a  
27 compensation scale determined by each individual state, commonwealth or territory. While on state status,  
28 National Guardsmen are not subject to the Uniform Code of the Military Justice, the federal tort laws and

1 also not subject to the restrictions and limitations of the Posse Conly Tilus Act (phonetic). National Guard  
2 units perform – excuse me, National Guard units or personnel may be ordered to active duty or federal  
3 status in accordance with Title 10 of the United States Code. Congress has given the President the  
4 authority to call the National Guard to active duty for augmentation of the active forces during  
5 presidentially declare national emergencies to enforce federal laws, suppress insurrection or repel an  
6 invasion. Title 32 of the United States Code defines the roles and missions and functions of the National  
7 Guard. Section 109 allows governors to use their National Guard or their state militia to conduct state  
8 duties. These duties are accomplished without federal funds. Other sections of Title 32 allow for federal  
9 funding of specific missions. Some examples are Section 113 allows for additional duty when servicing,  
10 maintaining, repairing active component military equipment. Section 502 allows for National Guardsmen  
11 to receive federal funds for drill, annual training and other duties. Section 503 for field training exercises.  
12 504 for National Guard schooling, 505 for active component schooling and field exercise. Simply put,  
13 when employed in a Title 32 status, National Guard personnel are still under the command and control of  
14 the Governor, but receive federal funding to perform a federal mission. This mission is most often  
15 associated with training for their federal mission. While there are advocates for expanding this training  
16 status to include non-federal missions like fire fighting, I would defer and discussion on this matter to  
17 members of Congress who enact the law.

18 Next slide, please. As part of the 2004 National Defense Authorization Act, Congress asked the  
19 Director of the Office of Management and Budget to conduct a review of existing authorities regarding the  
20 use of the Air Force and the Air National Guard Modular Airborne Fire Fighting Systems and other DOD  
21 assets to fight fires. We are assisting them in their review. Their report is due back to Congress at the end  
22 of March. Further, the Department of Defense is in the process of updating our Memorandum of  
23 Agreement with the Departments of Agriculture and Interior. This has been a long arduous process, but  
24 we're confident that the MOA will be signed prior to the beginning of the 2004 fire season.

25 Mr. Chairman, that concludes the formal portion of my briefing. MR. VERGA and I will be happy  
26 to entertain any questions.

27 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Colonel, thank you very much. I, I know there are some questions about  
28 the incident as it related to the, to the Cedar Fire and the availability of Marine helicopters, Coast Guard,

1 Navy, did we forget anybody? Anyway, so rather than do those now, there are some – let me, there was a  
2 question – okay, go ahead.

3 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm Jerry Williams with the U.S. Forest Service.  
4 Thank you for your testimony here today. There's kind of two issues, I think, go on in my mind. One has  
5 to do with the authorities and availability of military aircraft during wild land fire operations. The other  
6 issue though goes back to some discussion we had a little earlier today that centered on safety of air crews  
7 and effectiveness of water retardant under extreme burning conditions. A few weeks ago we heard  
8 testimony that among the wild land fire services, there's, there's some important thresholds, 35 mile and  
9 hour surface wind speeds that is kind of our limit in terms of air crew safety and retardant effectiveness.  
10 What are your thoughts on those thresholds? Are they any different than, than the thresholds we have  
11 discussed earlier? Could you give us some, some of your thinking about that?

12 COL. LaCROSSE: Certainly. And what this is is my opinion. I'm not a C-130 pilot. I would defer  
13 to, to the professional Air Force officer who has to fly those missions, but keep in mind that a C-130 is a  
14 sizeable aircraft and it has to fly low and slow to be effective in fighting, fighting forest fires. It has to fly  
15 low enough so that when it dispels its retardant, it will be dispelled at the point of attack that's desired.  
16 And then it has to have enough room to maneuver out of the, out of harm's way. It, it's not a fitting  
17 apparatus to try and fight a fire in a canyon because it can't fly low enough and then maneuver out safely.  
18 And we have officers flying C-130's with mass in them with years of experience. They, in coordination  
19 with the fire aviation folks at the National Agency Fire Center and the California Division of Forestry are  
20 the ones who ultimately make that decision if, if it's safe to fly a mission.

21 SECRETARY VERGA: I think something that's important to keep in mind is again is the  
22 Department of Defense is assisting the lead civil authority in undertaking whatever the particular mission is  
23 that we've been asked to do, in this case would be fire fighting. And we have certain capabilities that can  
24 be brought to bear on the particular problem and the judgment as to how you employ those capabilities is  
25 done in conjunction with the lead agency. We basically are deferring to them in terms of how they want to  
26 employ the DOD resources. We review requests for assistance essentially for lawfulness to ensure that  
27 they – we are lawfully allowed to do the mission and for appropriateness and for its impact on DOD's  
28 primary mission because all – I won't say all because you never say all – but the laws that allow us to

1 provide support to civil authorities have in them the caveat that this can only be done if it does not degrade  
2 the military readiness to the United States. And so we have to make that judgment. And that becomes  
3 particular important in times like this when there is a lot of operational stress on the DOD forces which is  
4 why you have the Secretary of Defense personally deciding whether or not a particular mission ought to be  
5 undertaken.

6 MR. WILLIAMS: I appreciate that. I raise the question because I think the, the capability aspect  
7 of this thing really needs to be the leading question. It would be a shame if we built a false expectation in  
8 revising the Economy Act that with that we would be pushing military or really any other asset to a bad  
9 position in terms of, of approaching that threshold or exceeding that threshold.

10 SECRETARY VERGA: And quite honestly we might not be available. And if the plans for any  
11 particular emergency are totally dependent or to a great extent dependent on the availability of DOD assets,  
12 we may be otherwise engaged. And, you know, the fact that the C-130's of the California National Guard  
13 might be deployed overseas and they might not be available and we have to bring them from somewhere  
14 else. Now we try very hard to balance the use of the forces so that we can meet all of our mission  
15 requirements, but again our primary focus in the military defense of the country and when that involves  
16 overseas operations, that's where the assets have to be.

17 CHAIR CAMPBELL: And, and we certainly don't argue, argue that fact at all. Supervisor  
18 Mikels.

19 SUPERVISOR MIKELS: Yeah, one quick question. We're proud to have the 146<sup>th</sup> at Channel  
20 Islands in our county and we worked to get some J models put there.

21 SECRETARY VERGA: And they do a great job.

22 SUPERVISOR MIKELS: They do. But my question we also at Naval Base of Ventura County  
23 have any two wing. And they have to fly proficiency missions constantly. So why couldn't we approach  
24 this from the technology transfer side of the books and not the, the Title 32 if, if in fact those Hawkeyes are  
25 up there flying? I know not classified, but I know the unclassified capabilities and it seems to me that  
26 under that circumstance they already have to fly those proficiency missions so we're not use –  
27 unnecessarily using an asset, but what they see certainly could be helpful during some of these emergency  
28 times. And, and there might be a scheduling problem, you know, as far as maybe they weren't gonna fly a

1 proficiency mission that day, but has anybody looked at that? Get away from this command and control  
2 stuff and, and kind of think through what, what the Navy has to do and what the Guard has to do and then  
3 what our local capabilities or local require – needs might be and see if we could coordinate it that way  
4 instead of going through the –

5 SECRETARY VERGA: Sure.

6 SUPERVISOR MIKELS: -- this other hoop.

7 COL. LaCROSSE: I think those are great suggestions, and along with the local Navy you also  
8 have civil air patrol that can, can fly surveillance missions even if it's using a hand-held or a goggle type  
9 infrared system that, that could, could provide that, that same capability, not the immediate downlink but at  
10 least you'd have, have eyes in the air, wouldn't have the, the hover capability over a, a fire that a unmanned  
11 aerial recognizance vehicle would have. But there are a lot of platforms out there that are in the DOD  
12 inventory, civil air patrol, Coast Guard that can augment the local and state resources.

13 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you. Congresswoman Davis.

14 CONGRESSWOMAN DAVIS: Thank you. Thank you for being here. You know, earlier we had  
15 a, a discussion or a question Assemblyman LaSuer was asking about the Navy helicopters. That was a big  
16 issue during the, the Cedar Fire. Could you walk us through that just as briefly as possible and help us  
17 understand what occurred. The issues around the, the licensing the certification –

18 COL. LaCROSSE: Sure.

19 CONGRESSWOMAN DAVIS: Whether or not –

20 COL. LaCROSSE: Ma'am, certainly I can.

21 CONGRESSWOMAN DAVIS: -- they had the – not just were they available; were they certified  
22 to fly? The other thing that would be helpful to understand also is perhaps, and you don't have to go way  
23 back in history, but is it possible to look at the times in which requests have been made to the Navy here in  
24 San Diego, how are those requests made, what where the responses, under what conditions, how can we  
25 help make better recommendations around those issues so that we don't have that situation again where,  
26 you know, there is so much controversy around it?

27 COL. LaCROSSE: Yes, ma'am, I'd be happy to address both of those issues. The first issue  
28 concerning the, the Navy helicopters, those are Navy reserve helicopters, they do have full-time manning.



1 They have a, a mission to suppress fires on San Clemente Island as well as, as other DOD installations  
2 where fires may, may come up so they are by DOD standards equipped and trained to perform a fire  
3 suppression mission. However, that does not mean they have California Department of Forestry  
4 certification; they have incompatible radio systems to communicate with the incident commander on the  
5 ground. So it's my understanding that, that the installation commander, being a good neighbor, was, was  
6 ready to assist in the, the Cedar Fire, came forward offering support and because of, of safety concerns for,  
7 for the crew because of the communication and the training and maintenance of the aircraft could not be  
8 verified to CDF's standards a decision was made not to immediately employ those, those helicopter assets.

9 CONGRESSWOMAN DAVIS: When, if you look back at that, now that we're, we're doing some  
10 cross-training, I understand?

11 COL. LaCROSSE: Yes, ma'am.

12 CONGRESSWOMAN DAVIS: Do you feel as if that response would be different in the future?  
13 And I guess the response year-round, not just perhaps during the fire season.

14 SECRETARY VERGA: The, if I can, Tom, the – first of all, it's, understand it was not our  
15 decision that the Navy helicopters would not be employed. It was, in fact, a decision of the Incident  
16 Command System that was being employed in the fire. I think that the work that CDF is doing with the  
17 unit to address some of those, those concerns will result in their certification to be employed locally under  
18 that doctrine of immediate response that we talked about earlier which allows the local commander to, in  
19 fact, do things to mitigate – save lives and mitigate great property damage. So I don't think there are any  
20 policy level issues that really need to be addressed. It is, in fact, the, the tactical level certification kind of  
21 things and, again, the planning for the employment as part of the overall fire response.

22 CONGRESSWOMAN DAVIS: And I guess –

23 SECRETARY VERGA: But –

24 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Can I interject a question here?

25 CONGRESSWOMAN DAVIS: Sure.

26 CHAIR CAMPBELL: The question of the, of the where you, where the personnel are – you train,  
27 you, the Navy pilot gets trained and then his unit is trained and then they're deployed somewhere.

28 SECRETARY VERGA: Right.

1 CHAIR CAMPBELL: And then you have a new crew down there and you have to go through the  
2 process of –

3 SECRETARY VERGA: Right.

4 CHAIR CAMPBELL: -- retraining them. The, the, the big problem as I see it, of course, is still  
5 the communications. And we're gonna get to that in the next hearing. You can't have, you can't have  
6 aircraft in the air with whom the ground cannot communicate.

7 SECRETARY VERGA: Right. Especially in a fire situation.

8 CHAIR CAMPBELL: That's one of the major safety factors and I think we all understand that.  
9 But I think it's we want to be able to bring to bear every source available to fight fires when they're as  
10 devastating as this one was.

11 SECRETARY VERGA: I, and I –

12 CHAIR CAMPBELL: What we, what we need to do is make sure we work out those problems  
13 and, and there's no reason why we shouldn't be able to do that.

14 SECRETARY VERGA: No. And I agree. But I would say that there was a lot of discussion about  
15 stationing another CDF helicopter in the San Diego area as I recall. Don't say because we're gonna have  
16 the Navy helicopter (unintelligible – speaking simultaneously) certified.

17 CHAIR CAMPBELL: We wouldn't do that you, Secretary.

18 SECRETARY VERGA: -- we can do it because we might not be there. They may, in fact, have –  
19 because while their job is to be able to fight fires on San Clemente Island, should they be needed elsewhere  
20 they may be pulled out and deployed and that would leave, that would leave a hole. But I, I agree that –  
21 and, and the fact that they are a reserve unit will have the advantage of they're going to return back here  
22 after they are deployed. I mean, typically unless we make major restationing issues.

23 CONGRESSWOMAN DAVIS: And I think we would understand that, that obviously –

24 SECRETARY VERGA: Right.

25 CONGRESSWOMAN DAVIS: -- that ongoing training would be important because the  
26 individuals who were trained may, in fact, not be –

27 COL. LaCROSSE: Yes, ma'am.

28 CONGRESSWOMAN DAVIS: -- in the area they would have to be in.

1 SECRETARY VERGA: Absolutely.

2 CONGRESSWOMAN DAVIS: Enough trained. Could you respond though to other requests  
3 made here in San Diego in this regard has there been the kind of, I'm trying to think of other devastating  
4 fires or other needs that we've had here locally where –

5 COL. LaCROSSE: Ma'am, I've, I've only been doing this for, for five years at the Pentagon and I  
6 do not recall any specific requests for Navy assets in the San Diego area. What we usually get is, is a  
7 request from the National Interagency Fire Center who are managing fires all over primarily the Western  
8 United States they will come to DOD and ask DOD for a capability i.e. a, a fire fighting battalion. And  
9 then we look at our resources and decide if it's gonna be a, an Army battalion or a Marine battalion and  
10 whether it's gonna come from Fort Hood, Texas, possibly Camp Pendleton, Fort Bragg, any of the, the  
11 bases which have large military forces. And they could be fighting a fire in Montana or Idaho or  
12 Washington state or Oregon, but I don't specifically in the last five years recall any specific requests for  
13 fire fighting assets in San Diego. I recall during the power situation a few years ago where there was some  
14 discussion about hooking up a nuclear carrier and try and power San Diego. I don't think that was  
15 favorably considered.

16 [Laughter.]

17 SECRETARY VERGA: It's a little problem.

18 CHAIR CAMPBELL: But it was considered.

19 COL. LaCROSSE: It was considered.

20 SECRETARY VEGA: Oh, yeah. Every request is considered, I promise. But representative  
21 Davis, we, I, I will have some research done and get you some answers on it.

22 CONGRESSWOMAN DAVIS: Okay.

23 SECRETARY VERGA: I mean, we've got the records.

24 CONGRESSWOMAN DAVIS: Thank you very much.

25 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you, gentlemen, very much. No, I –

26 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Mr. Chairman?

27 CHAIR CAMPBELL: I –

28 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: May I ask one follow-up to the Congresswoman?

1 CHAIR CAMPBELL: No, I, I – we have a problem.

2 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Okay.

3 CHAIR CAMPBELL: It's 6:10. We've got some people in the public who have sat here all  
4 afternoon who want to testify and I, and I'm gonna ask the Chief to be very brief in his – get his comments.  
5 So, Mr. Secretary and Colonel, thank you very much for being here.

6 SECRETARY VERGA: Thank you.

7 CHAIR CAMPBELL: We appreciate your participation. Chief McOrmond is from the, the which  
8 tribe, Chief, but you represent the Bureau of Indian Affairs today, is that correct?

9 Mr. McORMOND: The Pechanga Fire Department.

10 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Pechanga Fire Department.

11 Mr. McORMOND: I have a couple of co-partners that are working their way down here also, so.

12 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Okay. The hour is 6:10 or 1810 as we're talking today.

13 Mr. McORMOND: I'll do –

14 CHAIR CAMPBELL: And we want to, we want to break this off as soon as we can. So we  
15 appreciate your being here and if you could expedite your testimony, thank you.

16 Mr. McORMOND: Very well. Thank you, Chairman and Commissioners. I will be very brief.  
17 But I do want to hit on some of the areas that are probably new and I won't be repetitive. What we are  
18 right now is Scandrake (phonetic) which is we represent the tribal fire chiefs. Along to my left here I have  
19 Chris Walters and he represents the Emergency Management Council. And then also we're representing  
20 BIA here, Steve here next to me. And what we're gonna discuss is the tribal impacts that we had during the  
21 fires. The tribal fire departments are another resource in this area. We had tribal resources that were  
22 implemented throughout the state on all the fires as they were occurring from Simi Valley all the way down  
23 to here in San Diego. So there were resources sent out. I'm hoping that I stay with my slide there. Okay.

24 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Chief, how much tribal land was burned in this?

25 Mr. McORMOND: And we'll go through that on here on the –

26 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Okay, good.

27 Mr. McORMOND: -- over –

28 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you.

1 Mr. McORMOND: Let's go to the next one. We had – there were, there were 11 tribal  
2 governments that were effected and – next slide – over 30,000 acres of tribal land was effected. And so  
3 there was also on interior lands we had over 60,000 acres. Okay. And then going back over to the Cedar  
4 Fire we have the reservations broke down in acreage and when you take a look at the acreages here this  
5 may be the entire amount of a reservation. If you're looking at the size of either a city, county, when we're  
6 looking at these, this acreage that burned, this may be an entire reservation.

7 Next slide. And these areas and also from the Paradise and the Old Fires these are the acreage  
8 breakdowns also in those counties. And from, from San Bernardino and San Diego. As far as through this  
9 we've had a total of quite a few homes lost throughout this also. You can take a look, we had 142 homes  
10 that were lost on these reservations. Barona, 39, Rincon 32, San Pasqual which took the biggest  
11 devastation of 71 homes. That almost wiped out the entire reservation in some of those homes even though  
12 that we did have quite a few homes in the reservation saved. As far as also there was 10 lives lost on the  
13 reservation or near the reservation and this is, we're talking out of over the entire fire siege 22 lives lost and  
14 there was 10 in the reservations areas.

15 Next slide. As the homes damaged, you can see some of our infrastructures that we're still trying  
16 to stay with all the federal and state codes so we're tile roofs, we're stucco buildings so the same process as  
17 far as clearances that we've heard throughout the testimonies and – next slide, please. But the damaged  
18 homes, anytime we have a wind driven fire you can see the damage that takes place in through the  
19 infrastructure from bridges – doing okay there? And roadways and barriers throughout the reservation.

20 I'm gonna stop at this point right now and Chris is gonna pick it up at this point.

21 MR. WALTERS: Okay. And what Ed was kind of showing is the, the cultural resources that were  
22 damaged on the reservations. Southern California culture history actually begins over 12,000 years ago and  
23 this came out of the Bear report that was done for the tribal lands. There's actually 105 documented  
24 prehistoric -- historical sites. The tribes also from the damage they're now starting to actually from the  
25 brush that's burned off they're actually finding additional historical sites on the reservations that are now  
26 being recorded as well as some of the, the sites that were damaged. This here is actually at, on the San  
27 Manrales (phonetic) reservation. This was actually looting that occurred that the tribe was never aware of.  
28 Items that were dug out on the reservation but the brush had covered it. The tribe's also very concerned

1 about their cemeteries. With the erosion problems and control problems that we're now having on the  
2 reservations a few of the tribal cemeteries were impacted. This is an unrecorded prehistoric trail. And one  
3 of the San Diego tribes, the Guten Ranch House (phonetic) there were some historical sites that were, were  
4 damaged on the reservations that, that had considerable significance. Same as Chief McOrmond  
5 mentioned, the homes that were lost on the reservation such as San Pasqual they lost almost every one of  
6 their homes. A lot of their history that they had in those homes, all those people and everything they had  
7 and that's really one of the reasons we're here is, you know, so that the tribes aren't forgotten and set aside.  
8 And, you know, we appreciate you inviting us for testimony.

9 Wildlife, you want to continue, let me take it. Okay. The wildlife for federal listed species  
10 occurred in the fire area, a number of rare species. There's a lot of cultural significant areas that were  
11 impacted from the fires as well as all the erosion controls and the plants that were on their debris. You can  
12 see here one of the, the creeks that run through the reservation as a water source that was completely  
13 damaged that will have to be rebuilt. The hillsides and erosion control problems. With the rains of – and  
14 when we get in San Manuel a little more, I'll talk about the rain. This is an aerial view, some of the Tecate  
15 Cypress trees on that Otay Fire, San Diego Barrel Cactus. Soils and watershed damage. We bring that up  
16 with the rains of, of Christmas. We heard a lot about the Waterman Canyon and the debris flow that came  
17 down Waterman Canyon. The San Manuel Reservation has also had some debris problems. We actually  
18 had about three football fields 12 feet deep of mud come down our reservation. So, so quite a bit, tons of  
19 debris and mud that we've had the Army Corp of Engineers assisting us in clearing that, getting ready for  
20 the next storm.

21 Barona had homes and cultural center impacted. Their golf courses or casino, major roads. Wha  
22 we're really showing is that the tribes have a lot of infrastructure that they need to protect and the  
23 continuity of government that they need to protect and, and we're really here so that the tribes aren't  
24 forgotten, that their fire departments are, are recognized and their capabilities and their governments  
25 actually recognizes the sovereign governments.

26 San Manuel, this was the, some of our, our homes and like Chief McOrmond mentioned also we  
27 have strict building, building ordinances just like any city or any county. They have a preplot plans. Every  
28 one of our homes are stucco and tile roofs and double pane windows – every single home on the

1 reservation. Every home has 30 to 300 feet clearance depending on the slope, the ground slope that it's on.  
2 We also have additional damages for our natural resource. We have a water bottling plant on our  
3 reservation so it shut down our operations which along with the casino put a couple thousand people out of  
4 work for awhile.

5 San Pasqual, they actually utilize their casino. This was actually a horse that was burned, it's face  
6 that was burned from the, the Paradise Fire and they had a refuge area. San Pasqual, what you see on this  
7 slide here is some of the areas, the homes that were actually saved. When you look in there in the tight  
8 roads the fire fighters did actually save some homes. They had very limited resources. Chief Maxi  
9 (phonetic) had to leave, he was here, the Chief of San Pasqual earlier today, and Howard initially  
10 mentioned that they had four fire engines and a truck to protect Rincon and San Pasqual reservations. This  
11 is all the resources he had. What you can see is a lot of the, the mud up above there that, that now the tribes  
12 worry about that they're gonna have to mitigate and prevent the mud from sliding down further into the  
13 reservation damaging the homes that they did save.

14 Pechanga was utilized as a, as an area of refuge for a lot of people that were evacuated, over 700  
15 people actually had, had refused that Pechanga Hotel as well as some of the other tribes have helped out  
16 with the disaster relief fund. Our tribe donated over \$1 million to disaster relief along with the Mirango  
17 (phonetic) tribe that matched it for a \$2 million for disaster relief to the Red Cross, to the City of San  
18 Bernardino and other various agencies. Again, the infrastructure and their government, they also have a  
19 gas station.

20 Rincon, this is the Rincon Reservation that San Pasqual also protects that, that burned through there  
21 most of their reservation. A lot of area that was tough for access and tough to get into that they needed  
22 aerial support. Also the infrastructure here continued job growth and development with casinos and hotels  
23 and Viajas (phonetic) with their shopping malls and a lot of, lot of jobs that are created on tribal lands that  
24 were affected from the fires.

25 This is an aqueduct up on one of the reservations that the Bear Report identified as erosion  
26 problems on both sides of the aqueduct possibly that they need to look through on the reservations.  
27 Contaminated water is gonna be another big issue for the – on tribal lands.

28 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Whose aqueduct is that? Is that the tribe's aqueduct or is that –

1 MR. WALTERS: Yeah, that's actually, that's actually the Rincon's. That's an aqueduct that runs  
2 through the Rincon reservation. This is the Viajas. Viajas had damage to some of their homes or  
3 businesses and their major roads. Some of the tribes – we showed that one narrow bridgeway – some of the  
4 tribes do have limited road access and one way in, one way out. Go ahead. Quipie (phonetic), Quipie had  
5 some damage up on their reservation also and water quality, a lot of the water comes from the San Vincent  
6 Reservoir that feeds some of the reservations and they had quite a bit of debris flow that went into, to that  
7 that will impact the tribe's drinking water for those 10 tribes that were impacted in that area. So there again  
8 to stress the importance of the water quality. There's some hazmat cleanup on some of the reservations that  
9 the USEPA is working on now and working with the tribes for, a for a lot of the hazard waste – hazardous  
10 waste and tires and vehicles that were discarded on tribal lands.

11 Debris flow, we mentioned about the, the problems we had at San Manuel. It's with all the  
12 reservations. With the rains we're expecting continued problems with it and really, really what's, we, you  
13 know, are here for is to not forget about the tribes, but as the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program comes  
14 through and the state administers it from FEMA, we want to make sure the tribes aren't forgotten about and  
15 we're left on our own. Which is similar to a lot of, lot of the funding now that the federal funding goes to  
16 the state and it doesn't come to the tribes.

17 CHAIR CAMPBELL: I think there have been some meetings with the state officials with Director  
18 Jones at OES and other people and also with Homeland Security.

19 MR. WALTERS: You are correct.

20 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Or setup, I know that

21 MR. WALTERS: Senator Campbell, we, we did meet. Our emergency management council have  
22 met with Dallas Jones two weeks ago and we're making progress with the MPG and we've set up an  
23 appointment next month to, to discuss homeland security again. Last year we were unsuccessful for tribal  
24 inclusion. A lot of the tribal fire departments do have mutual aid and automatic aid agreements within the  
25 cities. Temecula, they have truck company. Pechanga, they respond in the cities. Our fire engines from  
26 San Manuel are in the cities on a daily basis.

27 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Okay.

28 MR. WALTERS: And need adequate training. We'll go back to you.



1 Mr. McORMOND: Okay. And I'll just pick it up here. And we're trying to keep this very brief.  
2 But as long as we have, we have the fire departments that are in place throughout the tribes and we do have  
3 mutual aid agreements, automatic aid agreements and we do make sure that all of our fire department  
4 people are certified as far as the state Fire Marshall. We did meet with Director Jones on assisting us with  
5 OES. We work very good hand-in-hand with – in Riverside County with the CDF Riverside County Fire  
6 and San Bernardino with San Bernardino City Fire. And we have a very good relationship there that we  
7 feel with the fire departments. In our fire department's capabilities we have all the, all the capabilities as  
8 any type of local government, state government fire department. We have the staffing, they're well trained,  
9 we have the equipment and they're being added on more and more as we go. And you can take a look at  
10 some of our capabilities here as far as our equipment that we, that we have here and let me just go ahead  
11 and – What we're, what we're looking at to, to let the Commission know is that we need to keep the  
12 relationship open there as far as when an incident goes down. An incident doesn't look at what resource is  
13 there, what color engine is there, what's the name on the engine and I think a part of it and I think we've  
14 talked about it in these last meetings is that communication, having this auto aid agreements in place  
15 beforehand, before an incident goes down that we have the closest resource response to that incident in the  
16 initial attack phase. That's where we're gonna stop a lot of these fires is the closest resource to that  
17 incident regardless of what agency. And I think sometimes we get caught up in the agency of jurisdiction  
18 or everybody wants to handle their own incident within that jurisdiction. I think working together with all  
19 agencies regarding a jurisdiction that's where it falls into place of getting first there on the scene, mitigating  
20 the problem. We've also been involved with the fire safe councils in making sure that we work with our  
21 clearances, we're, we started some programs from there's chipping programs that are available, we're  
22 looking at the clearances that keeps coming about 100 feet, 200 feet, what is the right number. But when  
23 we know we have a wind driven incident that no matter what that clearance may be, we still are gonna take  
24 some destruction when it comes to homes. So we are looking at all these avenues of how we can mitigate  
25 future incidents in the, in, in all areas that we serve. One of the, the items that I think that works real well  
26 is that the resources on – we had a large incident, a Pechanga fire and I know it's been mentioned a couple  
27 of times about CDF incident command teams, that's a, a huge tool that I feel that's in the State of  
28 California that we have. When we have these large incidents they have to be managed and when they're

1 managed correctly, you have a smooth transition. I happen to be on a CDF command team. I was recently  
2 at the Simi Fire and the fire that was three jurisdictions we went unified command between LA County, LA  
3 City and Ventura and I do want to praise Ventura County Fire that they, my understanding is in that  
4 Ventura County they do a lot of pre-drills working with all the agencies and I think that was a plus with all  
5 the agencies coming together with the CDF command team that came in there and working together for one  
6 common goal. And I think this needs to be utilized throughout any incident using adjoining resources either  
7 it be CDF, LA County, LA City, the local government, the BIA and the tribal fire departments.

8 And I'm gonna, I'm gonna stop right there and I'm gonna turn it over to BIA and he's got a really  
9 quick – okay, Steve?

10 MR. FILMORE: Yes. Yeah, I promise it is brief – promise it is brief. My name is Steven  
11 Filmore, I am the Fuels Management Specialist for the Southern California Agency of the Bureau of Indian  
12 Affairs. I was asked by the members of Scandrake to give a brief overview of the fuels management  
13 program that is on Indian reservations. Just to know that the BIA is another federal level agency that has an  
14 active fuel reduction program that showed benefit during the recent fires. The Southern California agency  
15 worked with 29 tribes in Southern California. San Diego, San Diego County has 18 tribes; that's more than  
16 any other county in the nation by the way. That helps to explain why 10 reservations were effected by the  
17 Cedar Fire alone – well, yeah. I'm sorry, 10 tribes in San Diego County rather. The BIA's fuel program is  
18 divided into two actual parts: of course hazard fuel reduction and wild land urban interface. Twenty-two  
19 tribes of the 29 have completed or currently working on in the field right now or developing a fuels  
20 reduction project through the BIA SEA funds. Our, our hazard fuel reduction program concentrates on  
21 areas of potential operational points. Tribes have learned that it's valuable to have things such as fuel  
22 breaks, area fuel reductions when a fire event comes through. These can take the form of contingency  
23 lines, back fire lines, any operational point.

24 Next slide. Our wild land urban interface project –  
25 [End of Tape 3, Side A – Beginning of Tape 3, Side B]

26 MR. FILMORE: -- these structures that are remote have difficulty, there's difficulty accessing  
27 them to get literally fire engines back there in case they want to go back and protect.

1           Next slide. I'm gonna through this real quick. I just want to state that the program is picking up  
2 steam. I came on about six months ago. I inherited the fiscal year '03 and '04 projects. Now that they  
3 have someone full-time and we've jumped from less than 10 projects per year to I'm anticipating in our  
4 next funding cycle around 30 project proposals which is a big jump and a big boom. The goal also is not  
5 only to do the projects but to maintain them every year. That's a also a personal goal that I have. More  
6 tribes every year are seeing the importance for fuel reduction projects especially after these fires. Fourteen  
7 were affected – well, 11 tribes were – had fire on their reservation and three more were evacuated, so 14  
8 were actually affected by the Cedar, Paradise or the Old Fire. I'd also like to point out the tribal fire  
9 departments are often leaders in the planning and the implementation of these fuel projects, especially the  
10 members of Scandrake which I'm here to back up are some of the most proactive people the – everything  
11 concerning fire often time on the Indian reservations falls to the fire departments and many of them are  
12 doing a very excellent job. I invite anyone who wants to see to contact us over them.

13           And I have some pictures I can glaze over them in the interest of time if you prefer.

14           CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you very much.

15           MR. FILMORE: And move right to questions.

16           CHAIR CAMPBELL: Chief, thank you. Any questions? Thank you, all. We appreciate very  
17 much your summarizing your testimony. We appreciate your being here.

18           Mr. McORMOND: Yeah, we did that pretty quick, so.

19           CHAIR CAMPBELL: Yes, you did and we're appreciative of it. We'll now move to the public  
20 sector and we have three people signed up. I'm gonna ask them to come up and be seated here at the head,  
21 at the witness table. Tom Gardner, Mike Rogers, and George Corser (phonetic). If I mispronounced your  
22 names, I apologize. Would you identify yourselves and where you're from and the area you represent and  
23 then go ahead. We'd like, we'd like it if you an limit it to five minutes each if that's possible.

24           MR. ROGERS: Yeah, I'll make my comments quickly.

25           CHAIR CAMPBELL: Okay.

26           MR. ROGERS: I think the –

27           CHAIR CAMPBELL: Would you move close to the mic so we can hear you.

28           MR. ROGERS: Good. Can you hear me okay?

1 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Yes, sir.

2 MR. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Commissioner, for hearing us and I thank the Board for enduring  
3 for those of you that are left. I'm Mike Rogers. I work for the Forest Service. I started in 1957 as a fire  
4 fighter on a hot shot crew and retired after 42 years and I'm now consulting. I live in Rancho Pino Squito  
5 so I was very close to the situation. There are a couple of points I want to address that we haven't  
6 addressed yet. There is a national effort that's been going on since 1998-99. It came out of the National  
7 Fire Plan. And it has to deal with Firewise Community Workshops. And we've been, we've conducted 33  
8 of these nationally and thanks to the Director, Andrea Tuttle, we've had 10 of them statewide in state, but  
9 we haven't had any in Southern California with the exception of LA County, the Board of Supervisors and  
10 Chief Michael Freeman hosted one in Agora. That was in October of 2002 and we have Kern County  
11 Chief Steve Gage (phonetic) here that hosted one in Bakersfield with the County Board of Supervisors in --  
12 a year ago today. We haven't had any of these workshops in Southern California and they solved many of  
13 the issues that we're talking about here today, bringing the community together to figure out how to solve  
14 these issues about living in wild land urban interface areas.

15 We talked about the clearance. We've got good research data that have been developed with public  
16 monies and are, are National Forest Service research stations that have developed computer models that  
17 show and thankfully two years ago the state increased the minimum clearance to 100 feet. I believe it was  
18 two years ago. It used to be 30 feet and we were playing a catch up game with around a lot of residential  
19 areas trying to meet the, the newer higher standard. The models will show though that in the various fuel  
20 types we have in Southern California there are places where you need more than 100 feet, but we don't  
21 need 200 feet, but we don't need 300 feet. The workshop, the workshop issues or the workshop exercises  
22 that we do show how these modeling programs work and how we can live in this communities, build fire  
23 safe communities and let the, it, where they stand alone – we call it survivable space rather than defensible  
24 space – and the fire agencies can get on with fighting the fire, the wild land fire and the homes take care of  
25 themselves. And this process does work.

26 The other subject that I wanted to address real briefly is the open space. The, the net catcher drove  
27 the MSCP, the Multiple Species Conservation Plan. I don't believe in this conservation planning, but  
28 there's, there's some things we're not paying attention to. We call these open space preserves and I think

1 that terminology is getting us in trouble. These aren't preserves that we have to have a hands off  
2 management philosophy on. These preserves need to be managed. I like to refer to them as set aside open  
3 space rather than preserves. Preserves creates a wrong connotation. As an example, the 1993 Laguna Fire  
4 burned through a very large area of the San Joaquin hill and it set back the net catcher population that  
5 occupied that habitat. There were some survivors on the fringe, but with biological surveys that have  
6 occurred and as of 2003, that population is exceeding what the pre-fire population was in 1993. These,  
7 these species are very resilient, however, they'll reach a peak at about 15 to 20 years then they start back in  
8 a decline and we're trying to save all this open space because we've got a declining net catcher population  
9 and we actually have to be manipulating that habitat to keep the population healthy. That population will  
10 start declining on its own when that vegetation starts reaching 30 years and goes onto 70 years. The Cedar  
11 Fire vegetation was 33 plus years. It really needed to be disturbed with fire, but not all at once. So I want  
12 to make the point that we need to manage these areas.

13           So in summary there's two things we need to work on: the Firewise Community Workshops.  
14 We're hosting one. FEMA, Federal Emergency Management Agency has tasked the California Department  
15 of Forestry with putting on two workshops in Southern California. I was asked by CDF to host the San  
16 Diego workshop. It's scheduled for the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of February and it's at the Carmel Mountain  
17 Doubletree Hotel. We would really like to get and I talked to Supervisor Cox, the Mayor and the county  
18 supervisors to open that session. It'll be the first one we've had in the San Diego County. The other one is  
19 in Redlands. We've never had a workshop in San Bernardino, Riverside or Orange County. That would be  
20 the second workshop. Thank you very much.

21           CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you very much, Mr. Rogers. Next?

22           MR. GARDNER: I'll go next. Good evening, my name is Tom Gardner. I'm a 31 year veteran  
23 with the fire service, 25 here in San Diego. I was the lucky Emergency Command Center Captain on duty  
24 when the Cedar Fire started and for the Chairman I was also the lucky captain on duty when the Normal  
25 Heights Fire which is what brought you down in here in 1985 for the hearings on that. And I've been  
26 through a lot of fires in my years and other than a couple in Sacramento, it's been mostly here in San  
27 Diego. But this time my house was, was briefly threatened and instead of me being on the phone, I had my  
28 house firstly I had to pack up my belongings. And it, it drove me to come down here and, and ask to make a

1 couple of comments. What I want to try and ask is this Committee needs to come out with its  
2 recommendations. Over the years -- Chief Wright actually mentioned a lot of the recommendations, the  
3 1972 report it actually talks about year-round staffing in 1972. The Laguna Fire from the National Forest  
4 actually talks about managing the wild line and doing burning. It also talks about a countywide fire  
5 department and this is in 1970. A lot of these reports, a lot of these committees meet after every 10 years  
6 or so and I think the easy recommendations are done, but I think the tough ones get pushed aside and I  
7 think now is the time that we need to do a couple of the tough ones. We need additional staffing. We need  
8 replacement of radios. City of San Diego didn't have enough batteries, I mean the handy talkies are  
9 breaking down. Our fire -- the CDF fire trucks, they were in and out of the garage I don't know how many  
10 hours the mechanics worked on them to keep them running during the fires. Our fleet is way over age. It's  
11 gonna be tough and, and trying to find the money to do this -- our elected Congresswoman and Senator and  
12 Assemblywoman, it's gonna be very tough to get the money to do this. It's gonna take some redirection  
13 and it's gonna take some new ideas. But I certainly don't want to be back here in 10 years before another  
14 committee and before Chairman Campbell again saying we need to follow-up with what this Committee  
15 comes out of. Your recommendations, you're, you're the valued, the knowledge of listening to everyone  
16 testify. Your recommendations need to be acted on by those in Sacramento and those in the cities and  
17 counties. And it's gonna be tough and I know you don't have the authority to force them to it, but sure  
18 maybe if we get that Predator up there maybe it'll get a little warning shot to 'em.

19           Lastly, just when you call 911 we're gonna respond. Fire fighters are gonna be there. But what the  
20 staffing level on that engine, who is gonna be responding and how far away they're gonna be responding is  
21 up to the legislators and it's up to the citizens and the public in the State of California to determine. And  
22 we need to get their support to get this done. Thank you.

23           CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you very much. Mr. Corser, is that the correct one?

24           MR. CORSER: It certainly is. Thanks so much, Senator. And I appreciate your patience along  
25 with the Commissioners. I'm certainly happy to be here. I'm from the Hidden Meadows area, just north  
26 on the 15. I think Lawrence Welk would be the best landmark for that area to be described. It's was  
27 effected by the Paradise Fire and unfortunately there were lives lost in that area also. I, I've come back to  
28 two comments that you made, Senator that really stood out the very first, the presentation. And those were

1 the obstacles to fighting and preventing fires and also, of course, the same issues being revisited. And if I  
2 may I can answer those in one word and that is *sprawl*. We have brought this on to ourself in San Diego  
3 County. There have been conscientious decisions made by the County Board of Supervisors and their staff  
4 and their land use personnel that have known that the wildlife urban interface is so important in the  
5 proximity of new construction, yet this has been overlooked. This has been passed upon. This has been  
6 signed off on. And we're in a situation that was predictable and it has been predicted and it's been seen  
7 historically. The 19, well I can go back to 30 years ago, this has been foreseen; we know that. But no  
8 actions have been taken. And this is very disconcerting to residents to see, you know, neighbors,  
9 neighborhoods, schools, all these things affected by something that could be planned for and is known.  
10 The biggest concern is that we have a land use process that is self determined by a lead agency that has the  
11 same capabilities of accepting the developer's monies, the special interest groups, and we go on to build  
12 even cities and communities. It's a pattern that has gone on for nearly 10 years to my knowledge and it  
13 sees no stop here. And I have to say that I'm quite surprised that I'm, I don't see the two supervisors in  
14 attendance who were most affected by these fires.

15 CHAIR CAMPBELL: We are only one supervisor from each county and that was a Chairman who  
16 was invited to be on the Commission. So that's why you have generally the Chairman of the Boards of  
17 Supervisors of the five affected counties. And so that's our – it's not that they're not interested in this, it's  
18 just that they weren't, they're not members of the Commission.

19 MR. CORSER: I understand. And I do appreciate that. If there is a message you could take back  
20 to the Governor is that San Diego's disaster had nothing to do with the outstanding fire fighters. We have  
21 the world's best here in San Diego. This has nothing to do with brush. The brush has been managed for  
22 more than 12,000 years by the Kumiai (phonetic), by the Laseno (phonetic), by the Juanenos (phonetic),  
23 this is built in. Was it wisely used? Oh, no. That is where the issue I believe is. Our land use and  
24 planning has brought us sprawl. And I thank you for your time.

25 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Let me, let me say this, Mr. Corser. First of all, personally given my  
26 weight I've never used the word sprawl.

27 [Laughter.]

28 CHAIR CAMPBELL: But, you're right. I know that to what you are referring.

1 MR. CORSER: I appreciate that so much.

2 CHAIR CAMPBELL: The land use is one of the issues that is, with which this Committee is going  
3 to make some recommendations. Building codes is some of the issues. But I want to say this as we close  
4 this hearing. When that fire starts and those Santa Ana winds hit, in all honesty there's not much we can do  
5 until that, until that wind dies down and that fire dies out. But what we know we can do is we can do pre-  
6 planning. And what most of our recommendations are going to be on on the issue of what we do to prevent  
7 these from starting in the first place. And it's a whole myriad of issues, it's just not, it's just not one, one  
8 thing. It's just not the fire, it's just not the police, it's not the sheriff. There are a myriad of agencies  
9 involved and somehow we've got to get them involved. Let me give you one quick point and then we'll  
10 adjourn. And that is in the, in the East Bay or the Oakland Hills Fires there lost an untold amounts of  
11 property, the streets were too narrow, but one of the recommendations they made was that where there were  
12 swimming pools and they rebuilt those swimming pools, they required a line to come out to the sidewalk or  
13 to the curb and that line could be hooked up by the fire department because there was a lack, there was no  
14 water supply in the Oakland Hills when that fire hit, and they can use the water from the pools to do that.  
15 That seems like a very logical thing to require particularly in the, the urban wild land interface. Because,  
16 again, when you get into some of these areas the, the electricity is off and the water isn't pumping so you  
17 have a water supply for the fire fighters.

18 MR. CORSER: Indeed.

19 CHAIR CAMPBELL: These are some of the things that we're going to be looking at also. And,  
20 and I think as I said earlier, we have reached a position where this fire is, has been so devastating that it's  
21 just, it's, it's got the attention of everybody.

22 MR. CORSER: Yes, it has.

23 CHAIR CAMPBELL: It's got the attention of your chief elected officials in the state and in the, in  
24 the nation, in fact. It's got the, it's got the, your local, your city, your supervisors, your city council  
25 members, your special districts people are all now involved. And I think we need that and without that we  
26 can't make this, this work. But with that we can. And one of the reasons we have members of the  
27 legislature on here is bills will be introduced and those bills will be introduced and they will be carried  
28 probably by the members on this Blue Ribbon Commission. And they will have the impetus of our report



1 behind him as they move through the legislature. We have two members of Congress, Congressman Jerry  
2 Lewis and Congresswoman Susan Davis. And they have the, the ability to interface with the federal  
3 agencies and that's one of the reasons we wanted them on here is because we just didn't want to hold the  
4 state officials to the fire, feet to the fire, we want to hold the federal officials feet to the fire also. So when  
5 we put the Commission together, those are some of the things about which we were thinking and how we  
6 could direct this attention. So we, we feel that we recognize the responsibility that we have and it is an  
7 ominous responsibility, yet I believe we have the expertise and we have the ability to come up with a report  
8 that will hopefully prevent some of these things from happening again. We're not gonna, we're not gonna  
9 be able to stop all fires, that's unrealistic to expect. But those things that didn't work we ought to take them  
10 and throw them out and start with something that we know will work.

11 I'd like to thank the members of the Commission. I'd like to especially thank the Commissioner of  
12 the Highway Patrol, Commissioner Spike Helmick and Lt. Clayton Carter and the members of the Highway  
13 Patrol here today from the San Diego here who are providing security for this, for this group. And I'd like  
14 to thank all of you who stuck around and the majority of you did and that amazes me because I've been on  
15 committees where I ended up being the only one there if I was the Chairman. And sometime when I wasn't  
16 the chairman I was the first one who left in all honesty.

17 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: I'd like to thank you for your continued public service,  
18 Senator Campbell. You are a legend in the fire service.

19 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Thank you very much.

20 UNIDENTIFIED MALE SPEAKER: Here. Here.

21 CHAIR CAMPBELL: Meeting stands adjourned.

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