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***Resources Agency Secretary Mike Chrisman Announces Implementation
of Blue Ribbon Fire Commission Recommendations***

*Blue Ribbon Commission Chairman and Retired State Senator William Campbell,
welcomes the announcement, praises commission's work*

*California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Director Dale Geldert calls effort
a significant step in safeguarding the public during fire season*

*Governor's Office of Emergency Services Director Henry Renteria hails effort, commits
to wildfire preparedness*

SACRAMENTO - California Resources Agency Secretary Mike Chrisman today announced 31 action steps that will enhance the ability of California's fire and emergency preparedness agencies to more effectively respond to and prevent devastating wildfires. The plan announced today incorporates recommendations made by California's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission (BRFC), which was formed by outgoing Governor Gray Davis and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to evaluate fire response in the aftermath of the 2003 Southern California wildfires.

Officials from California's Resources Agency, Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and Office of Emergency Services used the BRFC report to develop 31 action steps that have either been completed or are underway. In the coming months, the state will implement and announce a number of subsequent measures as funding is secured and planning completed.

"Living in California means learning to live with fire. Protecting Californians during fire season is our first priority," said Resources Secretary Mike Chrisman. "The Blue Ribbon Fire Commission's recommendations will enhance our efforts to not only fight fires, but prevent them before they begin."

The Blue Ribbon Fire Commission, comprised of members from federal, state and local jurisdictions, was charged with reviewing the response to the 2003 wildfires and providing recommendations for fire response, suppression and prevention. The recommendations released in May range from strengthening the fire safety councils and improving public education to staffing increases, communications, training and equipment upgrades.

"I'm proud of the commission's work. With fire season underway I'm grateful to see the Schwarzenegger Administration taking a proactive stance to protect Californians," said Retired State Senator and BRFC Chairman William Campbell. "The BRFC has demonstrated how both the public and private sector, regardless of party affiliation can come together to provide leadership in difficult times and challenging situations. I applaud their work."

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According to Secretary Chrisman, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) and the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) are working closely in responding to wildfires following recommendations from the commission. In addition, federal and local agencies are now working together more effectively with the state to ensure that programs and agreements for land use and fighting fires from the air are more efficient and effective.

"We are taking a significant step in helping to safeguard Californians and their property with the implementation of these recommendations," said CDF Director Dale Geldert. "The people of California should feel safe, but they should also know that they have a role to play in helping us fight fires before they start."

Governor's Office of Emergency Services Director Henry Renteria said, "The Governor's Office of Emergency Services is committed to making every effort to mitigate the loss of life and property from wildfires." He added, "We will continue to devote all available resources to assisting California communities in their wildfire preparedness and response efforts."

The current 31 action steps include; a governor's executive order increasing resources for fire response, an initiative by the California Biodiversity Council to speed removal trees killed by bark beetles, a letter from the governor to county governments encouraging residents to be fire safe, a cooperative effort between CDF and the U.S. Forest Service for use of air tankers and the implementation of a \$39 million program to reduce hazardous fuels build-up in the Sierra Nevada range.

Further steps taken include:

- Extended flight days to fight fires from the air
- Fuel reduction progress
- Improved public information process
- Restoration of fire camp crew strength
- Use of military resources
- Stronger fire safe councils
- Equip OES and CDF with new technology
- Updated vegetation management plan
- Improved public education planning
- Modernization of the OES operational area satellite information system
- Disposal of biomass related to fire fuel reduction
- Requests for federal action
- Enhanced agreements for aerial fire fighting
- Local government surveys on protective gear and communications equipment
- Use of the Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System (MAFFS) as a program for air assets.
- Recommendations on additional fire engines needs in wildlands
- Expanding model training agreements

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- Conducting a training needs assessment through the State Fire Board
- Conducting a training needs assessment for the National Guard and other military resources
- Statewide agreements to reimburse local governments for federal and state use
- Working with local governments to define structural protection issues
- Ongoing updates of mutual aid agreements
- Emergency Medical Services Authority's role in mutual aid and the impact to private ambulance companies
- Local government education on implementing volunteer programs
- Continuing staff and technical assistance for community wildfire protection plans
- Working toward consensus with the federal government on the National Fire Plan

Seven additional steps are dependent upon stable funding sources. These include;

- Create year-round firefighter capacity in Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego Counties
- Provide a plan to replace obsolete CDF fire engines
- Replace outdated helicopters
- Telecommunications and fire resource management plans
- Plan for 4.0 fire engine staffing
- Strengthen the California Fire Plan
- Propose a comprehensive post fire plan

Attached:

Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission Members
CDF Action Plan

For more information www.resources.ca.gov

Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission Members:

Chairman - Former State Senator William "Bill" Campbell will chair the Commission, comprised of the following representation:

Local

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors - Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, Supervisor [BIO](#)
Riverside County Board of Supervisors - John Tavaglione, Chair
San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors - Dennis Hansberger, Chair
San Diego County Board of Supervisors - Greg Cox, Chair [BIO](#)
Ventura County Board of Supervisors - Judy Mikels, Chair, Ventura County Fire Department - Bob Roper, Chief
San Bernardino City - Judith Valles, Mayor
San Diego City - Dick Murphy, Mayor
San Diego Fire and Life Safety Services - Jeff Bowman, Chief [BIO](#)

State

California Senate - Deirdre Alpert, Senator
California Senate - Jim Brulte, Senator
California Senate, Dennis Hollingsworth, Senator
California Senate - Nell Soto, Senator
California Assembly - Robert Dutton, Assemblyman [BIO](#)
California Assembly - Christine Kehoe, Assemblywoman
California Assembly, Jay LaSuer, Assemblyman
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection - Andrea Tuttle, Director
California Emergency Council - Chip Prather, Chief
California Office of Homeland Security - Rick Martinez, Acting Director
Governor's Office of Emergency Services - Kim Zagaris, Fire Chief
Office of American Indian Affairs - Marilyn Delgado, Director [BIO](#)
Office of State Fire Marshal's Office - Ron Coleman, Marshal (ret.)
FIRESCOPE - P. Michael Freeman, Chief

Federal

U.S. Senate - Dianne Feinstein, Senator
U.S. Congress - Susan Davis, Congresswoman
U.S. Congress - Jerry Lewis, Congressman
U.S. Department of Defense - Peter Verga, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
U.S. Forest Service - Jerry Williams, Director
U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency - David Fukutomi, Federal Coordinating Officer [BIO](#)
U.S. Department of Land Management - Larry Hamilton, Director

Associations

California Fire Chiefs Association - William McCammon, President
California Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association - William Bamattre, Chair
California Professional Firefighters Association - Bob Wolf, 6th District Vice President
California State Firefighters Association - Jeff Sedivic, President