



## Solano Local Agency Formation Commission

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(707) 438-1785 • FAX: (707) 438-1788

August 28, 2008

The Honorable Ramona Garrett  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
Solano Superior Court  
600 Union Avenue  
Fairfield CA 94533

RE: Solano LAFCo Responses to Solano Grand Jury Report Entitled: **Solano County Fire Protection Districts.**

Dear Honorable Judge Garrett:

As the Chairperson of Solano Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo), I would like to extend our gratitude to the Solano Grand Jury for including the testimony of our Executive Officer, Shaun S. Pritchard, in the Grand Jury's **Solano County Fire Protection Districts** study.

The Solano LAFCo discussed and approved the findings below at its August 11<sup>th</sup> regular meeting. Solano LAFCo shares in the Grand Jury's concern over the sustainability of Solano County's Rural Fire Protection Districts. Currently, LAFCo is working through several issues with the Fire Districts, County and Cities to proactively find solutions for many of the concerns shared by the Solano Grand Jury and Solano LAFCo.

**Finding 1** - Funding for Fire Districts is limited. One of the most critical needs is for fire fighting vehicles.

LAFCo is in agreement with Finding No. 1.

**Recommendation 1a** - Fire Protection Districts and the Board of Supervisors should work together to identify funding sources for regular replacement of older vehicles. Provisions in the Government Code authorize additional funding sources.

The Commission agrees with Recommendation 1a. Solano LAFCo encourages the Fire Districts to work with all local, State and Federal agencies for replacement of aging equipment. Another possible source of revenue could include the passage of parcel taxes by landowner vote. Solano LAFCo has an active Fire District Subcommittee looking into current service levels and the revenues required to both maintain and enhance services.

### Commissioners

John Saunderson, Chairperson • Len Augustine, Vice-Chairperson  
Jim Spring • Mary Ann Courville • John Silva

### Alternate Commissioners

Mike Reagan • Nancy Shopay • Eddie Woodruff

### Staff

Shaun Pritchard, Executive Officer • Michelle McIntyre, Commission Clerk

**Recommendation 1b** - Fire Protection Districts and the Board of Supervisors should continue to explore cooperative opportunities to obtain additional funds through creative efforts such as grants.

The Commission agrees with Recommendation 1b. Solano LAFCo encourages the Fire Districts to work with all local, State, and Federal agencies in seeking grants. Staff believes the County may have staff dedicated to seeking grants. The Commission will inquire into use of this person's expertise in seeking grants for the Districts.

**Finding 2** - Communication is often difficult because equipment and frequencies used by different fire fighting agencies are not compatible.

The Commission agrees with Finding 2. LAFCo's Fire District Subcommittee has discussed the issues concerning frequencies. This subcommittee has asked that the Fire Districts provide LAFCo with fiscal estimates to address this issue. In the past, the County has worked with the Fire Districts to modernize their communication systems.

**Recommendation 2** - Fire Protection Districts, Cities, and the County should standardize and consolidate communications as soon as possible.

The Commission agrees with Recommendation 2. A standardized communication system for all of Solano County's fire agencies would be beneficial in improving coordination for the protection of life and property.

**Finding 3** - Dispatching is challenging because dispatchers also serve law enforcement agencies.

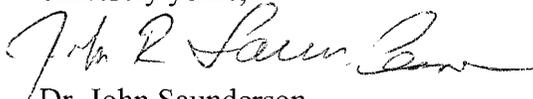
The Commission partially agrees with Finding 3. There is no doubt a separate system would be ideal. LAFCo, however, is unsure of the full costs and benefits of such a system. The larger issue seems to be direct communications between some of the Districts and some of the City Fire Departments.

**Recommendation 3** - The Fire Districts, Cities and the County should explore options to develop a centralized Fire Dispatch.

The Commission partially agrees with Recommendation 3. While this is a subject area that should continue to be studied, LAFCo would place more emphasis on standardized communications between the Districts and City Fire Departments.

Should the Grand Jury require further information, please do not hesitate to contact Shaun Pritchard, Executive Officer, at 438-1785.

Sincerely yours,

  
Dr. John Saunderson  
Solano LAFCo Chairperson

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