



CAL FIRE LOCAL 2881

IAFF • AFL-CIO

Representing the Professional Firefighters of CAL FIRE

Dear Supervisor Joe Simitian:

I wish we could say that the term “historic fires” was not so familiar to all of us. The women and men of every fire department find themselves working extraordinary hours as more than three million acres have burned in California and toxic ash is a familiar sight to everyone who goes outside

As you understand, CAL FIRE is a critical component of the collaborative effort to save lives and property. While I wish the timing was better, as President of the local chapter of CAL FIRE 2881, I am forced to say without equivocation that the CAL FIRE agreement with the South County Fire District is premised on efficiency, cost-effectiveness, ability to be collaborative and clearly the best response to the disasters we have confronted together. We oppose any effort to abrogate the agreement that extends through June 30, 2023 in favor of consolidation. Not only would such a move prove harmful to the communities being served, it is a bureaucratic and operational nightmare. The appeasement of personal ambitions exhibited by a few would be a carelessly created disruption to systems already adaptable to remarkable challenges.

Consider that cancelling the agreement through the dissolution of South County Fire District requires a one year written notice. Any subsequent concept involving CAL FIRE necessitates a full review, oversight and approval from CAL FIRE Cooperative Fire Program and the director of CAL FIRE – a process that runs 18 to 24 months.

As a reminder, CAL FIRE is uniquely positioned as the largest fire department in California to provide specific services efficaciously and with an understanding of budgets. CAL FIRE does not consolidate or subcontract with other fire agencies.

We are always supportive of review and assessment. A LAFCO review is a venue we have supported in other areas because we are confident that an independent examination of services proves how well-served the families and businesses of our communities are by CAL FIRE.

Please feel free to call me at any time if you have questions or would like to discuss at greater depth the issue.

Best,
John Byrne