



PIONEER FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
FIRE • RESCUE • EMS

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To: **Presiding Judge of the El Dorado County Superior Court**
El Dorado County Grand Jury
P.O. Box 472
Placerville, Ca 95667
(530) 621-7477

Date: Wednesday, June 11th 2008

RE: PIO Fire's Response to El Dorado County's 2007-08 Mid-Term Grand Jury Report (Part-II, dated April 5th 2008)
IAW-California Penal Code Section-933.05, Consolidation of Fire Protection Districts (Case No: 07-025)

Pioneer Fire Protection District's Response to Findings:

Pioneer Fire Protection District disagrees wholly in the 2007-08 Mid-Term Grand Jury Report's findings, in which case our response shall specify the portions of the findings that are disputed in the report and shall include our explanations of the reason therefore.

1.) Reason for Report:

The first paragraph discusses nine local gov't fire districts and a CSD that provides fire/rescue services. Why is the CSD not a part of the consolidation scheme? Without all organizations being involved it is not a complete consolidation.

Paragraph two justifies this report on the basis of a comparison with the "average of other counties in California". El Dorado County is not an average county nor is Pioneer Fire Protection District an average local gov't fire protection district. The district encompasses 296 square miles which makes it one of the largest in the state. Paragraph two states that "El Dorado County would benefit ..." Such a statement could only be made with consideration of the quality of service, the timelessness of service and the cost. By their own admission in the Background Section "Consolidation may also lead to more efficient service and lower administration costs, but these are difficult to quantitatively evaluate. Hence they have not been included in this report." We take that to mean that the necessary analysis has not been done. A review of the Findings & Recommendations and supporting exhibits would indicate that the issue being addressed is funding of the local gov't fire districts and not consolidation. If that is the issue, then the report should be withdrawn and a new report specially addressing funding should be issued.

Conclusion, there is no rational basis for the investigation or report by the EDC Grand Jury.

2.) Background:

In paragraph two of this section the statement is made "consolidation is not a new idea." That is a true statement and the Pioneer Fire Protection District has on two prior occasions studied the consolidation or merger of the district with El Dorado County Fire Protection District. The first such effort was when the Pioneer Fire District was considering

contracting for services with Cal-Fire (CDF), the second was when a benefit assessment per Prop-218 failed and other alternatives were examined. In this last effort, consultation by a committee of the EDC Fire Chief's Association assisted and an alternative of county-wide consolidation was never suggested. In both instances it was shown that, for both operational and financial reason, a consolidation with County Fire could not be effected without severe degradation of fire/rescue services.

The example given of the Cal-Fire Camino Dispatch Center (ECC) is not pertinent in that this was centralization, not consolidation, of dispatch services that is primarily one involving communication and related electronics and does not deal with operational issues. This was a costly and time consuming exercise with at least two iterations of software development. None of the problems of geographic and demographic distribution were inherent in this centralization as would be the case with widely distributed local gov't fire/rescue districts with limited infrastructure.

Paragraph six of this section states, "Most of the interviewed El Dorado County Fire Protection District officials favored more consolidation of local gov't fire districts."

This statement has no merit since in the "Methodology Section" it is clearly stated that of the nine local gov't fire protection districts and the CSD, only three were interviewed. This is hardly a representative sample and fails every statistical test for reliability or believability.

Conclusion, the section demonstrates that the El Dorado County Grand Jury has failed to develop background information that would justify the investigation or report and has in fact addressed the wrong issue.

3.) Methodology:

The size and make-up of the sample does not fairly represent the local gov't fire protection districts of El Dorado County California. Not only are rural districts excluded but the reliance on financial data without due consideration of operational matters makes the methodology faulty.

Conclusion, the methodology is fatally flawed due to inappropriate data gathering and analysis. Since the methodology is flawed the "Findings & Recommendations" are without merit and requiring a response is a misuse of taxpayer funds.

Findings definition, Item 3.b of Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition "The Results of an Investigation."

1. As discussed above, Pioneer Fire Protection District has conducted studies. If LAFCO lacks sufficient motivation to explore the subject, that is their concern.

Conclusion, the respondent disagrees as stated above.

2. (a) This method had been tried by the El Dorado County Western Slope Prehospital Emergency Services Joint Authority (JPA) for a period of over ten years and proven to be dysfunctional. The method has now been replaced.

(b) This statement shows a complete lack of understanding of local volunteer firefighter organizations in the outlying areas of El Dorado County. The Pioneer Volunteer Firefighters (PVFA) Association has over 200 volunteers. These are not firefighters; they work on annual crab banquets to raise funds for the district. An additional group of 40 to 50 volunteers provide year around service in publishing the bi-monthly PVFA Turnout Community Newsletter. Our six local communities would not be interested in supporting a consolidated fire protection district.

Conclusion, the findings is a presumption, and not the result of investigation. The respondent disagrees with the findings as discussed above.

3. Not with the purview of the Pioneer Fire Protection District.

Conclusion, the respondent disagrees with the findings.

4. A statement, not a finding that in any case does not apply to Pioneer Fire Protection District.

Conclusion, the respondent disagrees with the finding.

5. No correlation is made considering size, geographics, infrastructure, demographics and the tax base, and so does not provide a basis for a finding.

Conclusion, the respondent disagrees with the finding.

6. A Board of Supervisors option, and not in the purview of the Pioneer Fire Protection District.

Conclusion, respondent disagrees with the finding.

7. This is doubtful conjecture based on insufficient data and not supported by prior studies. Although there might be a reduction in District Fire Chiefs there could be a corresponding increase in deputy and/or associate chiefs, who in other local gov't fire protection districts, are more expensive than the chief at Pioneer Fire Protection District. The assumption that the personnel costs in Exhibit-C would result in savings has not been demonstrated.

Conclusion, the respondent disagrees with the findings.

8. One of the primary duties of the government is to provide for health and safety of its residents. The finding shows no comparison of the level of service with supposed savings. Further Item-8 is again a statement of what the El Dorado County Grand Jury seems to believe and is not a finding.

Conclusion, the respondent disagrees with the finding.

Recommendations:

1. This item is addressed to the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors, and not a local gov't fire protection district.

Conclusion, not within the purview of the Pioneer Fire Protection District.

2. Recommendation is directed to LAFCO and the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors, and not a local gov't fire protection district.

Conclusion, not directed to the Pioneer Fire Protection District. Will not be implemented.

3. The Pioneer Fire Protection District has already explored the consolidation issue on two separate occasions as reported above. Further, this recommendation is in conflict with Recommendation Two. The El Dorado County Grand Jury needs to decide which agency should be the lead agency.

Conclusion, recommendation will not be implemented.

Respectfully,

Dave Boucke, President
Board of Directors



Robert L. Gill, Fire Chief



Cc: PIO Board of Directors and PIO Administrative Staff
Ms. Helen K. Baumann, El Dorado County District-II Supervisor

Since 1980, proudly serving the El Dorado County communities of Mt. Aukum, Fair Play, Outingdale, Grizzly Flats, Omo Ranch and Somerset!