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November 5, 2008

Mr. John E. Ferreira, Chief
CAL FIRE San Mateo & Santa Cruz Unit
6059 Highway 9
Felton, CA 95018

Subject: Fire Protection in Bonny Doon

Dear Chief Ferreira:

Upon receiving a petition from Bonny Doon voters, the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) conducted a study concerning a proposal to form a fire protection district in Bonny Doon. During the evening of September 22, 2008, LAFCO held a public hearing and received substantial public testimony on the proposal. Thank you for your assistance in the study and participation in the public hearing.

Some of the testimony came from Bonny Doon residents who wanted better fire protection services, and were willing to pay more for improved services. Some of the testimony came from residents of the other rural communities served by County Service Area 48 (County Fire). They were concerned that the proposed fire district would divert revenues away from the existing CAL FIRE stations funded by County Service Area 48, and that service levels would decline in one or more areas served by these stations.

The LAFCO study identified three cost-effective operating and financing steps that could significantly improve fire protection and initial emergency response in Bonny Doon. One of those steps comes under your responsibilities as the CAL FIRE Unit Chief for San Mateo and Santa Cruz Counties:

1. The CAL FIRE company that is stationed in Felton during the fire season could be moved to one of the Bonny Doon stations. Note that the fire season costs for this company are paid by the State. There are virtually no County Fire or Bonny Doon resident costs for this re-deployment. The Felton Fire Protection District station is located on Kirby Street two blocks away from CAL FIRE's Felton Station. The San Lorenzo Valley has a number of able departments that can send several companies to an incident near Felton (Felton FPD, Zayante FPD, Ben Lomond FPD, Boulder

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Creek FPD, and Scotts Valley FPD). The re-deployed CAL FIRE company would continue to respond via several routes into the San Lorenzo Valley by traveling down Felton-Empire Grade, Alba Road, and Jamison Creek Road. A strong Bonny Doon volunteer company would still be needed to get sufficient forces to major Bonny Doon incidents, and to cover the community when the CAL FIRE company is deployed in a strike team to another community.

Please consult with the affected parties and consider whether the CAL FIRE should pursue relocating a station to Bonny Doon.

Very truly yours,

James W. Rapoza
LAFCO Chairperson

cc: County of Santa Cruz