

May 5, 2014

Elfin Forest/ Harmony Grove Fire Board
20223 Elfin Forest Rd.
Elfin Forest, CA 92029-6005

Dear Chief Barker,

I am writing on behalf of the EFHG Town Council to express our support for the merger of EFHGFD, CSA 107 and the Rancho Santa Fe Fire District.

The Rancho Santa Fe Fire District (RSFFD) is very familiar with Elfin Forest Fire (EFF)(CSA107), as we share common boundaries, with similar topography, and similar fire concerns of both structural and wild land type.

The proactive nature of RSFFD regarding fire prevention programs and enforcement, as well as the emphasis on the importance of fire prevention activities is in line with our own EFHG Fire Department's long term history of proactive fire prevention. This is in contrast with Cal Fire / SDCFA which tends to be reactive based on complaint.

Operationally, Rancho Santa Fe Fire District has mutual aid agreements with San Marcos, Escondido, Encinitas, and Carlsbad, all within close proximity to and familiar with our community of EFHG. Cal Fire/ SDCFA would be coming from greater distances- like Del Dios or Deer Springs, and are not as familiar with EFHG.

RSFFD has paramedics with their trucks that are "Schedule A" – Advanced Life Support" rated. As approximately 80% of 911 calls are for medical services other than fire, we feel this is very important to our community. Cal Fire/ SDCFA is primarily wildfire orientated, and is not normally a paramedic provider, but will contract with paramedic services as an extra cost, and with less accountability.

RSFFD is dispatched from the common dispatch in the North County- NCDJPA - which is the dispatch for most north county agencies. Cal Fire/ SDCFA is dispatched from the east county in El Cajon and has less familiarity with north county resources, and would be less timely in having to relay requests from El Cajon to NCDJPA.

Our EFHG Fire Department has been a long time leader in training of personnel and is familiar with the high standards of training required by the North County Academy of Fire Fighters. Cal Fire/ SDCFA fire fighters have an unknown level of training with emphasis on wildfire, and less on structural.

Important to us also is the idea of 'local control'. RSFFD is 'over the hill'. Our community is very proactive. We like being able to deal directly with the Fire Professionals in charge of administration, suppression, and prevention of our fire safety. We like the ability to be able to run and be elected to the Board of Directors of RSFFD, and to be able to address our fire concerns with a local agency that is addressing the same fire concerns as our community because we are so similar.

Cal Fire/ SDCFA would entail dealing with a much larger bureaucracy, state wide with headquarters in Sacramento that is regionally minded rather than locally concerned.

In short the EFHGTC feels that the merger of CSA107, EFHG Fire Department with the Rancho Santa Fe Fire District is the best solution for the fire safety for our community.
Thank-you.

Sincerely,

Bonita Baumgartner, Chair
EFHGTC