



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

AGENDA ITEM

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

PALOMA AGUIRRE
First District

JOEL ANDERSON
Second District

TERRA LAWSON-REMER
Third District

MONICA MONTGOMERY STEPPE
Fourth District

JIM DESMOND
Fifth District

DATE: August 26, 2025

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TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

ADOPT A RESOLUTION ENTITLED “REQUEST TO THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEES IN THE STATE LEGISLATURE TO TAKE ACTION ON FIRE APPARATUS ANTITRUST AND MONOPOLISTIC PRACTICES” (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

On April 8, 2025 (20), the Board of Supervisors (Board) directed the Chief Administrative Officer, in consultation with County Counsel, to explore legal and advocacy options related to fire apparatus antitrust and monopolistic practices under state and federal law.

Over the past decade, private equity firms have bought up larger shares of fire apparatus manufacturers, creating market consolidation that has undermined competition in this space. This consolidation has driven up prices, reduced production quality, and created years-long procurement delays. These challenges threaten to undermine the region’s readiness for wildfires.

Today’s action would adopt a resolution entitled REQUEST TO THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEES IN THE STATE LEGISLATURE TO TAKE ACTION ON FIRE APPARATUS ANTITRUST AND MONOPOLISTIC PRACTICES. Adopting this resolution would further advocacy efforts to address concerns around availability and reliability of fire apparatuses.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Adopt a Resolution entitled REQUEST TO THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEES IN THE STATE LEGISLATURE TO TAKE ACTION ON FIRE APPARATUS ANTITRUST AND MONOPOLISTIC PRACTICES

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Monopolistic practices disproportionately affect under-resourced and rural communities, where fire departments are already stretched thin. Ensuring equitable access to timely and quality fire trucks is crucial for the safety of all residents, regardless of income or location.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Modern and reliable fire trucks are essential for effective wildfire response and environmental protection. Addressing procurement delays aligns with the County’s sustainability goals by

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enhancing resilience to climate-related disasters through timely acquisition of crucial firefighting assets.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funds for this request are included as staff time in the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Operational Plan in the Office of Economic Development and Government Affairs. The funding source is General Purpose Revenue. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

Delays in fire truck procurement can lead to increased property losses, higher insurance costs, and economic instability in fire-prone areas. Taking action to address these delays ensures that fire departments have the necessary resources to protect homes, businesses, and critical infrastructure, thereby supporting economic stability.

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

On April 8, 2025 (20), the Board directed the Chief Administrative Officer, in consultation with County Counsel, to explore legal and advocacy options related to fire apparatus antitrust and monopolistic practices under state and federal law. Today’s recommended action would further advocacy efforts on this issue.

Over the past decade, private equity firms have bought up larger shares of fire apparatus manufacturers, creating market consolidation that has undermined competition in this space. This consolidation has driven up prices, reduced production quality, and created years-long procurement delays. These challenges threaten to undermine the region’s readiness for wildfires.

Our County of San Diego Fire Protection District has experienced these challenges firsthand, seeing extensive production delays that stretch over 900 days while fire truck prices have doubled from \$650,000 to over \$1.3 million. However, local fire districts have few alternatives as the lack of competition in the industry leaves them with no choice but to accept these inflated costs and excessive wait times.

The devastating wildfires that swept through Southern California in January 2025 underscored the critical importance of having sufficient, reliable, and readily available fire-fighting equipment. San Diego County is one of the most fire-prone regions in the entire state, with over 80% of the County designated as high or very high wildfire hazard severity zones.

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LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today’s proposed action to adopt a resolution on fire apparatus and antitrust and monopolistic practices supports the Community Strategic Initiative in the County of San Diego’s 2025-2030 Strategic Plan by supporting safety for all communities with adequate fire response, community preparedness, and regional disaster response readiness.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ebony N. Shelton', written in a cursive style.

EBONY N. SHELTON
Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT

Resolution - REQUEST TO THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEES IN THE STATE LEGISLATURE TO TAKE ACTION ON FIRE APPARATUS ANTITRUST AND MONOPOLISTIC PRACTICES