

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
TUESDAY, APRIL 26, 2022**

**MINUTE ORDER NO. 30**

**SUBJECT: SAN DIEGO COUNTY FIRE - ROADSIDE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT FOR EVACUATION PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM: CONSIDER THE USE OF AN EXEMPTION UNDER THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT AND AUTHORIZE SINGLE SOURCE PROCUREMENT (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

**OVERVIEW**

The County of San Diego continues to prioritize fire prevention and preparedness as the frequency and severity of wildfire disasters worsen throughout the state. Within the unincorporated county, the Department of Public Works (DPW) conducts annual mowing along roads for roadside safety. In addition, San Diego County Fire (County Fire) manages vegetation for fire safety in public areas and enforces related fire-safety-requirements on private property.

On March 16, 2021 (1), the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) directed the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to explore options to expand roadside vegetation management to better protect local communities from future fire incidents. Upon returning to the Board on July 13, 2021 (1), County Fire and DPW presented options for a *Roadside Vegetation Management for Evacuation Preparedness Program*. The Board directed the CAO to 1) develop a comprehensive, countywide approach to vegetation management, and return to the Board after identifying a funding source and preparing an implementation timeline, and 2) continue stakeholder outreach related to the Defensible Space for Fire Protection Ordinance and return to the Board with a proposal to amend it to align with the County Consolidated Fire Code.

On October 5, 2021 (2) County Fire and DPW returned to the Board with proposed amendments to the Defensible Space for Fire Protection Ordinance, which the Board adopted. Also, on October 5, 2021 (5), County Fire and DPW provided an update and requested initial resources to evaluate the proposed *Roadside Vegetation Management for Evacuation Preparedness Program*. Since that time, County Fire and DPW have identified 200 lane-miles of critical evacuation corridors with single entry and exit points that may benefit from additional roadside vegetation management for fire safety and retained a consultant to review the proposed project, which found no potentially significant impacts to the environment. In addition, County Fire evaluated long-term fire retardants for use in certain areas along the 200 lane-miles, to be used in combination with vegetation management. County Fire selected Phos-Chek FORTIFY®, given its approval by the U.S. Forest Service for use in federal and state forest areas, effectiveness, and durability.

Today's proposed actions by the Board include finding that the *Roadside Vegetation Management for Evacuation Preparedness Program* is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act, authorizing a single source procurement of fire retardant for an initial term of one year and four option years, and approving the *Roadside Vegetation Management for Evacuation Preparedness Program*, as described in this letter.

## **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

### **CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER**

1. Find that the proposed actions related to roadside vegetation management are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15301 and 15304(i).
2. In accordance with Board Policy A-87, Competitive Procurement, approve and authorize the Director of Purchasing and Contracting to enter into negotiations with Perimeter Solutions LP, and subject to successful negotiations and determination of a fair and reasonable price, award a contract for PHOS-CHEK FORTIFY® brand fire retardant for a one-year period with four options years and an additional six months, if needed, and to amend the contract as needed to reflect changes to requirements and funding. Waive the competitive procurement requirements of Board Policy A-87.
3. Authorize San Diego County Fire Protection District to implement the *Roadside Vegetation Management for Evacuation Preparedness Program*, as described in this letter.

### **EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

More than 80 percent of the San Diego County Fire jurisdictional area qualifies as a disadvantaged unincorporated community, based on a San Diego Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) report on the funding, administration, and performance of the former County Service Area No. 135 (now San Diego County Fire Protection District). Roadside vegetation management decreases the likelihood of entrapment, loss of life, and loss of property for residents of wildfire-prone unincorporated areas. A total of 79% of the unincorporated area in San Diego County is designated as High or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones.

County Fire offers support and education to help individuals who have barriers, such as ability, age and financial resources, and works with local Fire Safe Councils and other community organizations to achieve compliance with requirements for defensible space. In addition, County Fire and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) San Diego Unit staff refer individuals to grant-funded programs that assist with this work.

The Department of Public Works (DPW) utilizes data from road crews and community input, along with information gathered from California's Healthy Places Index, to identify areas along public roads to conduct vegetation management for roadside safety. As part of routine maintenance operations, DPW will coordinate with County Fire on their planned list of roads and scheduling. These actions are anticipated to positively impact equity and enhance vegetation management along evacuation corridors.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact as a result of today's requested actions. Subsequent years cost and revenue will be included in future Operational Plans for San Diego County Fire.

### **BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT**

N/A

**ACTION:**

ON MOTION of Supervisor Desmond, seconded by Supervisor Lawson-Remer, the Board of Supervisors took action as recommended.

AYES: Vargas, Anderson, Lawson-Remer, Fletcher, Desmond

State of California)  
County of San Diego) §

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of the Original entered in the Minutes of the Board of Supervisors.

ANDREW POTTER  
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors



**Signed**  
by Andrew Potter