



## **County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors**

### **Agenda Item Submittal**

**From:** General Services Department

**Subject:** Proposed 2025-26 Budget for County Fire Protection

**Meeting Date:** June 4, 2025

**Formal Title:** Approve the Proposed 2025-26 Budget for County Fire Protection, including any supplemental materials, and take related actions, as outlined in the referenced budget documents, and as recommended by the County Executive Officer

### **Recommended Action**

Approve the Proposed 2025-26 Budget for County Fire Protection, including any supplemental materials, as provided in the referenced budget documents:

- [Proposed Budget](#)
- [Fixed Assets](#)
- [Continuing Agreements List](#)
- Presentation

### **Executive Summary**

The Proposed 2025-26 Budget for County Fire Protection supports two divisions: County Fire, which includes County Service Area (CSA) 48, and CSA 4, Pajaro Dunes. Volunteer Firefighters and Emergency Medical Responders (EMR) make up the bulk of Santa Cruz County Fire Department staffing with supplemental staffing provided through a cooperative agreement with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE).

### **Discussion**

The mission of County Fire Protection is to protect the life, property, and natural resources of its citizens and visitors through effective emergency response, preparedness, education, and prevention. Department and division operational objectives are shown in the Proposed 2025-26 Budget document and 2025-27 Operational Plan. Both are available online at: [www.SCCVision.us](http://www.SCCVision.us)

Budgeted funding will continue to support structural fire protection, first responder emergency medical services, technical rescue, public fire safety education, and fire marshal services including code inspections for the unincorporated areas of the County that are not included in an autonomous fire district with a new CAL FIRE contract that has been updated to more accurately reflect the emerging needs of Santa Cruz County Fire.

The overall County Fire Protection budget is status quo and includes funding from CSA 48, Proposition 172 funding for the Fire Chiefs Association, and funding for Santa Cruz County Hazardous Materials Response Incidents Team. The County Fire contract with CalFire is currently under negotiation and represents a minimal change contract budgeted for maximum contract liability which will allow status quo services to the extent possible, which includes fire protection for CSA 4 Pajaro Dunes.

Over the next fiscal year, the department will focus primarily on creation of a new strategic plan for County Service Area 48, implementation of a year-round recruitment and onboarding strategy, and continued modernization of its fleet.

**Financial Impact**

The County Fire Protection Proposed Budget includes \$16,106,626 in expenditures offset by \$14,689,434 in revenues and other fund contributions of \$1,417,912. This reflects a total expenditure decrease of \$558,947, or 3.4% from the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Adopted Budget.

**Strategic Initiatives**

Operational Plan - Comprehensive Health & Safety, Sustainable Environment  
Climate Action - Wildfire Prevention

**Submitted By:**

Michael Beaton, General Services Director

**Recommended By:**

Carlos J. Palacios, County Executive Officer

**Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) did not significantly contribute to the development of this agenda item.