



# Rescue Fire Protection District

• P.O. Box 201 Rescue, CA 95672 • Phone: (530) 677-1868 • Fax: (530) 677-9609  
www.rescuefiredepartment.org

May 14, 2008

El Dorado County Superior Court  
Honorable Judge James R. Wagoner  
495 Main Street  
Placerville, CA 95667

Dear Honorable Judge Wagoner,

Please find attached the Rescue Fire Protection District's reply to the Grand Jury Final Report, Part II 2007/2008 that was received on April 21, 2008.

The Rescue Fire Protection District Board of Directors would like to make a few observations. We appreciate the time and effort that went into this report though we do not think that this report is completely accurate in its information and that the methodology was flawed. Lines E, F, and G on Exhibit A should not be included in the calculations. This report was also missing some pertinent information. We also think that all the Districts which receive the money from the County should have been interviewed, not just the bigger Districts. Their input would have been helpful in seeing the whole picture. No where in this report does it say that the level of fire and emergency service would at least remain the same or improve with consolidation. If not, then why consolidate? Finally, our Board believes that the level of service for fire and emergency services would decrease exponentially if the Board of Supervisors no longer provides the supplemental funding to Rescue Fire Protection District.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact either me or Chief Tom Keating at the above numbers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Anne Walker'.

Anne Walker, Board Chair  
Rescue Fire Protection District Board of Directors

MAY 22 2008





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## RESPONSE TO FINDINGS:

1. This is an opinion so we can neither agree nor disagree. Question: Can LAFCO initiate a consolidation?
2. Rescue Fire Protection District (RFPD) disagrees with this finding, which we believe is an opinion, not a fact. RFPD considered consolidation with another district a few years ago. The community overwhelmingly rejected the consolidation by a vote of 3-1. The employees themselves actually wanted to consolidate. As to point a) of finding #2, it is difficult to ensure that the smaller district will continue to be represented on the new Board after the consolidation.
3. RFPD does not think there is a fairness issue involved nor do we think the County contribution is a subsidy. RFPD sends 90 cents of every tax dollar to the County, whereas El Dorado Hills sends only 83 cents. The money we receive from the County was intended to correct this inequity. It is NOT a subsidy. Because of the mutual aid agreement in El Dorado County where all the fire departments will and do respond outside of their districts, the taxpayers receive fire and emergency services from all the districts, not just the one in which they reside. The 9.3% increase mentioned in the fourth paragraph is a prediction, not a fact.
4. This is a statement of fact so we cannot agree or disagree. Voters chose to pay for improvements not available with County monies with benefit assessments. These assessment dollars should have no bearing on the money the District receives from the County. The residents should not be penalized for their vote.
5. RFPD disagrees with this finding. The information for RFPD on Exhibit B is not accurate. In FY 06/07, Rescue received \$133,864 from a FEMA grant, \$83,502 for strike team reimbursement, and transferred \$400,000 from development fees that had been collected in past years for a new engine. These were all one time funds and should not be considered revenue. Therefore the total financing figure should be \$1,424,344, not \$2,041,530. That would also change our 'Total Funding as % of Base' from 26.66% to 18.32%. Also in Exhibit B, the N/A entries need to be filled in to show the true picture. That information should be readily available.





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6. RFPD does not disagree that the Board of Supervisors can discontinue these 'subsidiaries' at any time. Doing so would definitely degrade the fire protection abilities of those Districts, and the County as a whole, because of the mutual aid agreement.
7. RFPD does not agree that the consolidation of the fire districts would necessarily result in personnel savings equal to the amount of \$944,084. The three larger districts have a higher pay scale than Rescue. In a consolidation, the employees of RFPD would most likely get pay increases. Also, administrative cost savings would not be as much as represented. In many cases of consolidation, the Fire Chief and administrative assistant are absorbed into the newly formed district at the same rate of pay.
8. RFPD agrees that if the supplemental payments are eliminated the County will save money but at what cost to the citizens of El Dorado County who expect a certain level of fire and emergency service? Due to devaluation of properties and slow/no growth, the 9% increase is just speculation, not fact.

### RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. RFPD does not have the power to implement or not implement this recommendation. The Board of Supervisors must make that decision. In fact, Laura Gill, El Dorado Co. CAO, has recommended that the Districts continue to receive funding at the current amount. She has been working with the Fire Chiefs to explain the necessity of the funding to the Board of Supervisors.
2. RFPD does not have the authority to implement or not implement this recommendation. The Board of Supervisors and/or LAFCO should respond to this recommendation.
3. This recommendation will not be implemented at this time. The voters overwhelmingly voted to NOT consolidate four years ago and to help maintain their own district with a benefit assessment.