



County of Santa Cruz

GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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ROY HOLMBERG, DIRECTOR

December 8, 1998

Agenda: December 15, 1998

**Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, California 95060**

Amendments to the Santa Cruz County Fire Code and Fire Ordinances from Autonomus Districts

Dear Members of the Board:

In November, 1995, your Board adopted the 1994 Uniform Fire Code (UFC), incorporating the text by reference into the Santa Cruz County Code. Subsequently, a number of autonomus fire districts in the county adopted the County Fire Code and established their own district ordinances consistent with the County Fire Code through a process outlined under the state health and safety code.

With the pending publication of the 1997 UFC, the State begins a process of review and amendment that will be finalized on April 30, 1999. State law offers local fire authorities the opportunity to incorporate the latest UFC and adopt their own fire code by the date the State code goes into effect. Following this date, any jurisdiction without the new code will be governed by what the State adopts into law. This time line affects County Fire and all other fire districts.

In the interests of preserving specialized fire code enforcement and safety standards already in force in Santa Cruz County, and to support the county wide effort toward consistent code enforcement, the 1997 UFC has been reviewed by the county wide subcommittee of the Fire Prevention Officers Section of the Santa Cruz County Fire Chiefs Association. This subcommittee has formulated a proposed ordinance incorporating the new UFC and other code amendments into the Santa Cruz County Code. Considerable effort has been invested by the Fire Prevention Officers and County staff to ensure that the proposed ordinance will continue to

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provide for consistent county wide fire regulation. This concern for internal consistency affects the autonomous fire districts who intend to adopt the county code by their districts' respective ordinances.

Health and Safety Code (HSC) 13869.7 allows fire districts to adopt more stringent regulations than those published in the Uniform Fire Code. After a fire board makes a finding that special conditions warrant more stringent standards, an ordinance addressing those concerns will be proposed and forwarded to the County Board of Supervisors. The county has thirty days to respond in writing to those sections of the proposed ordinance that pertain specifically to the California Housing Code, with any comments becoming a part of the public record. If any changes are made as a result of the County's comments or the districts' public hearings, the proposed ordinance is revised by the fire district, adopted and then submitted back to the Board of Supervisors for acceptance, modification, or denial. The Board of Supervisors acceptance, modification or denial must happen within fifteen days following the fire district's final submission to the Board. This time line is running concurrently with the UFC adoption schedule.

Proposed ordinances are being submitted to your Board today from the fire protection districts of Aptos/La Selva, Ben Lomond, Boulder Creek, Branciforte, Central, Felton, Pajaro Valley, Scotts Valley and Zayante and have been placed on file with the Clerk of the Board. Staff anticipates scheduling the County Fire Code public hearing process to commence within the next few weeks, following this first initial comment period.

Obviously, the County benefits from the local determination of fire regulations, with a good example being the Santa Cruz County fire retardant roofing requirements; these advantages would be at risk if state law were imposed. The County also benefits when a cogent, coordinated enforcement system is in place county wide.

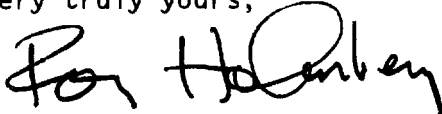
It is therefore **RECOMMENDED** that your Board:

1. Accept proposed ordinances from the autonomous fire protection districts of Aptos/La Selva, Ben Lomond, Boulder Creek, Branciforte, Central, Felton, Pajaro Valley, Scotts Valley and Zayante; and

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2. Direct the General Services and County Fire staff to transmit any written comments regarding the fire districts' respective ordinances to them no later than January 15, 1999.

Very truly yours,



**Roy K. Holnberg
General Services Director**

RKH: NCG

RECOMMENDED:



**SUSAN A. MAURIELLO
County Administrative Officer**

**cc: County Counsel
County Fire Chief Wert
J. Dias, Aptos/La Selva FPD
S. Sanders, Ben Lomond FPD
S. Robustelli, Boulder Creek
R. Stoops, Branciforte FPD
M Tranchina, Central FPD
R. Rickabaugh, Felton FPD
Pajaro Valley FPD
M McMurphy, Scotts Valley FPD
K. Boynton, Zayante FPD**

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