



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

701 OCEAN STREET, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4073

(831) 454-2000 WWW.SANTACRUZCOUNTY.US

CARLOS J. PALACIOS, COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

PRESS RELEASE

Date: August 26, 2019

Contact: Jason Hoppin

831-454-3401

BOARD TO CONSIDER FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES

On Sept. 10, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors will hear a report on challenges to Santa Cruz County fire protection and emergency medical response services, including whether to place a funding measure before property owners to improve fire services.

Through a contract with CAL FIRE, County Fire provides year-round fire protection and emergency response services in unincorporated areas of Santa Cruz County, including Bonny Doon, Davenport, Loma Prieta, Corralitos, Las Cumbres and the wider South Skyline area. County Fire has held a series of public meetings in those areas – known as County Service Area 48 – to raise awareness about the need to maintain quality fire protection services and ensure rapid 9-1-1 response times.

Fire protection and emergency response services through CAL FIRE face funding challenges, including 25 percent fewer firefighters on staff today than 10 years ago, a declining number of volunteer firefighters and a 22 percent increase in emergency calls. Engines also operate at below recommended staffing levels, and absent additional funding, the County could be forced to close a fire station during non-fire seasons.

One option to be considered by the Board is whether to hold a vote by property owners on implementing an assessment under Proposition 218 to fund additional fire protection and emergency response services. If approved, a mail vote would take place within 45 days of any Board action.