



July 21, 2020

Anne N. Granlund, Foreperson  
2019-2020 Contra Costa County Grand Jury  
725 Court Street  
P.O. Box 431  
Martinez, CA 94553-0091

**RE: City of Richmond's Response to Grand Jury Report 2007: "Wildfire Preparedness in Contra Costa County"**

Dear Foreperson Granlund:

In accordance with California Penal Code Sections 933.05(a) and 933.05(b), please find below the response of the City of Richmond to the findings and recommendations of the Grand Jury. The City's response is in italics directly below each finding or recommendation.

**FINDINGS**

1. During a Red Flag Warning, fire districts and fire departments in Contra Costa County often deploy pre-positioned firefighting strike teams to maximize the ability to respond to wildfires.

*Response: We agree with this finding.*

2. Fire districts and fire departments in Contra Costa County require property owners to perform weed abatement on their property to reduce the risk of fire spread.

*Response: We agree with this finding.*

3. Not all fire districts and fire departments in Contra Costa County use predetermined polygons and routing algorithms in their evacuation plans.

*Response: We agree with this finding.*

4. Fire districts and fire departments in Contra Costa County recommend that residents comply with law enforcement's orders to evacuate during an emergency.

*Response: We agree with this finding.*

5. Not all fire districts and fire departments in Contra Costa County use new technologies, such as ground sensors, drones, satellites, and fire spotting cameras, for early detection of fires.

*Response: We agree with this finding.*

6. The October 2019 Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) events disrupted emergency response efforts and communications in Contra Costa County.

*Response: We disagree with this finding. The City of Richmond did not experience a disruption in our emergency response or communications as a result of the PSPS.*

7. Fire districts and fire departments in Contra Costa County are not always informed by PG&E when the utility is performing non-emergency maintenance work that presents a high fire risk during a Red Flag Warning.

*Response: We agree with this finding.*

8. An ordinance passed by the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District, requiring PG&E to give advance notice of non-emergency maintenance work that presents a high fire risk, enables the fire district to pre-position a team at the utility worksite and recover labor and equipment costs.

*Response: We agree with this finding.*

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

5. The City Councils of El Cerrito, Pinole, and Richmond should consider directing their Fire Chief to update wildfire evacuation plans and incorporate predetermined polygons and advanced routing technology, by June 30, 2021.

*Response: This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. The Richmond Fire Department staff will work with the Richmond Police Department to update wildfire evacuation plans. The incorporation of predetermined polygons and advanced routing technology would be dependent upon our operating systems' ability to do so in conjunction with securing the necessary funds, by June 30, 2021.*

6. The City Councils of El Cerrito, Pinole, and Richmond should consider identifying funds to adopt or expand the use of new technologies, such as ground sensors, drones, satellites, and fire spotting cameras, to help detect fires in high-risk areas, by June 30, 2021.

*Response: This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. The Fire Prevention Services Division of the*

*Richmond Fire Department will seek grant funding for the adoption of new technologies to help detect fires in high-risk areas by June 30, 2021. Without grant funding, adoption of new technologies will likely not be implemented by June 30, 2021.*

7. The City Councils of El Cerrito, Pinole, and Richmond should review and consider mechanisms, such as the ordinance passed by the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District, that would enable their fire department to recover labor and equipment costs from PG&E for overseeing electrical utility work that presents a high fire risk, by June 30, 2021.

*Response: This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. The Fire Prevention Services Division of the Richmond Fire Department will research the ordinance passed by San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District and work with the Richmond City Attorney's office to consider a similar mechanism for the City of Richmond by June 30, 2021.*

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The Richmond City Council reviewed and approved this response at their meeting of July 21, 2020.

Should you seek additional clarification, please contact Fire Marshal Eric Govan at 510-469-3231 or [eric\\_govan@ci.richmond.ca.us](mailto:eric_govan@ci.richmond.ca.us).

Sincerely,



Laura Snideman  
City Manager

cc: Tom Butt, Mayor  
Rachel Sommovilla, Interim City Attorney