



RON ROBERTS
SUPERVISOR, FOURTH DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: June 15, 2010

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT: FLIGHT OF THE SUNBIRD: NEW AGREEMENT WITH SAN DIEGO GAS & ELECTRIC FOR AERIAL FIREFIGHTING EQUIPMENT (DISTRICT: ALL)

SUMMARY:

Overview

It is no secret that San Diego County is a wildfire prone region. Our dry climate mixed with a lack of moisture and Santa Ana winds is a recipe for disaster. Within the last decade, San Diego County has been the victim of multiple devastating wildfires.

On October 20, 2009, (11) the Board of Supervisors approved my recommendation to enter into an agreement with San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) to include its leased S-64E Helitanker, known as the "Incredible Hulk," in the County's Aerial Fire Protection Program. This agreement concluded at the termination of SDG&E's lease with Erickson, the owner of the helitanker.

Just prior to this year's high wind season, SDG&E will receive its purchased S-64E Helitanker, named "Sunbird," which will primarily be used to perform heavy-duty work for the utility company. Knowing that these helicopters are also very effective in fighting fires, SDG&E has once again offered to not only allow us to utilize this machine during fires, but also provide up to \$150,000 to pay for a portion of flight time.

Today's action will permit the County of San Diego to enter into an agreement with San Diego Gas & Electric which will allow us to utilize its S-64E Helitanker during fires. Through this agreement, the County will fund up to \$150,000 for flight time during fires. Funds for this request are included in the proposed Fiscal Year 2010-2011 Operational Plan under the County's Aerial Fire Protection Program.

The County will make this helicopter available to all local agencies, cities and fire districts at no additional cost, as long as funding for flight time is available. Where possible, the County will seek reimbursement from the State of California or the Federal Government for those expenditures.

Recommendation(s)

SUPERVISOR ROBERTS

1. Waive Board Policy A-87 and authorize the Director, Purchasing and Contracting to

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enter into negotiations with San Diego Gas and Electric to utilize its S-64E Helitanker in support of fire fighting support, and upon successful negotiations and determination of fair and reasonable terms, enter into a contract for up to 12 months with up to five (5) option periods through 2016 on behalf of the County of San Diego, and amend the contract as needed to reflect changes to services and funding, and to execute any related agreements or documents.

2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to again integrate the San Diego Gas & Electric S-64E Helitanker into the County's Aerial Fire Protection Program and take any additional actions necessary to award this contract.

Fiscal Impact

No additional appropriations are necessary as a result of this action. Funds for this request are included in the proposed Fiscal Year 2010-2011 Operational Plan under the County's Aerial Fire Protection Program. If approved, it is estimated that this request could result in a maximum of \$150,000 in current year costs, depending on flight time and reimbursements from the State of California or the Federal Government.

Business Impact Statement

Type here or use N/A

Advisory Board Statement

Type here or use N/A

BACKGROUND:

It is no secret that San Diego County is a wildfire prone region. Our dry climate mixed with a lack of moisture and Santa Ana winds is a recipe for disaster. Within the last decade, San Diego County has been the victim of multiple devastating wildfires, one in October 2003 and the other in October of 2007.

Since 2003, our board has worked unilaterally to further strengthen our region's readiness. Following the October 2003 firestorm, we have allocated more than \$130 million for fire preparedness and response, which, for example, was used to purchase two firefighting helicopters, clear hundreds of thousands of dead, dying or diseased trees, purchase a Reverse 9-1-1 system, purchase a new Mass Notification System known as Alert San Diego, upgrade our communications system, as well as for brush clearing and management.

On May 5, 2010, our Board received the Regional Fire Services Deployment Study which outlined our region's fire capabilities. This independent report pointed out many notable findings and recommendations. One finding in particular, that is not well known, is that our region commits \$517 million per year to fire and EMS services.

In 2008, at the recommendation of Supervisor Horn and me, our Board approved approximately \$3.2 million available in one-time dollars to lease two Bombardier CL-415 Superscooper™ fixed-wing amphibious aircraft for a three-month period. During this period, these highly effective planes

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dropped thousands of gallons of water on fires on Camp Pendleton, in the city of San Diego and elsewhere.

At the conclusion of this program, the County had approximately \$250,000 remaining in that account. On May 12, 2009, at the recommendation of Supervisors Jacob and Horn, our Board unanimously approved the use of these funds to implement the Unified Disaster Council's plan for a supplemental Aerial Fire Protection Program. This program is geared to provide a "tool box" approach by identifying specific aerial firefighting resources that can be utilized on a "call when needed" basis, either prior to a forecasted major wind event or immediately after a wildfire has started.

On October 20, 2009, (11) the Board of Supervisors approved my recommendation to enter into an agreement with San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) to include their leased S-64E Helitanker, known as the "Incredible Hulk," in the County's Aerial Fire Protection Program.

Just prior to this year's high wind season, SDG&E will receive its purchased S-64E Helitanker, named "Sunbird," which will primarily be used to perform heavy-duty work. Knowing that these helicopters are also very effective in fighting fires, SDG&E has once again offered to not only allow us to utilize it during fires, but also provide up to \$150,000 to pay for a portion of flight time.

Today's action will permit the County of San Diego to enter into an agreement with San Diego Gas & Electric which will allow us to utilize its S-64E Helitanker during fires. Through this agreement, the County will fund up to \$150,000 for flight time during fires. Funds for this request are included in the proposed Fiscal Year 2010-2011 Operational Plan under the County's Aerial Fire Protection Program. Today's action will also authorize the Director to execute any related agreements or documents necessary to accomplish the effective use of the helicopter.

The County will make this helicopter available to all local agencies, cities and fire districts at no additional cost, as long as funding for flight time is available. Where possible, the County will seek reimbursement from the State of California or the Federal Government for those expenditures.

The S-64E Helitanker can carry and unload more than 2,600 gallons of water per trip. It is estimated to need less than a minute to refill its tank for its next drop. It also can stay airborne for 2½ hours before needing to refuel. Depending on the location of a water source in proximity to the fire, this helicopter can potentially drop between 20,000 and 30,000 gallons of water per hour, and 70,000 to 80,000 gallons on a single fuel load.

Given the potentially-dangerous fire season ahead, it is important that we again act accordingly to expand existing firefighting resources in San Diego County.

I urge your support.

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Respectfully submitted,

RON ROBERTS
Supervisor, Fourth District

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AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET

CONCURRENCE(S)

COUNTY COUNSEL REVIEW	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	
Written Disclosure per County Charter Section 1000.1 Required	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
GROUP/AGENCY FINANCE DIRECTOR	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Requires Four Votes	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
GROUP/AGENCY INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
COUNTY TECHNOLOGY OFFICE	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A

Other Concurrence(s): N/A

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: District 4, Board of Supervisors

CONTACT PERSON(S):

Jason Farran

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AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE: _____