

SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA



FROM: Supervisor Jim Venable

SUBMITTAL DATE: January 8, 2004

SUBJECT: Resolution 2004 - 045 - Support for a Congressional Hearing relative to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board join me in adopting Resolution No. 2004-045 in support of a Congressional Hearing relative to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

BACKGROUND: On December 17, 2003, Congressman Ken Calvert sent a letter to Congressman Richard Pombo, Chairman of the House Resources Committee, asking for a Congressional Hearing of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Congressman Calvert cited that there is evidence of a "policy of obstructionism" within the Service relative to prescribed burns that may have contributed to the devastation wrought by recent wild land fires. Congressman Jerry Lewis has also supported this Congressional Hearing request. I strongly feel that this Board needs to take action to support Congressman Calvert's request in the form of this resolution.

Our county has developed a good working relationship with the Carlsbad office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and has found many of their staff members to be helpful and efficient. We do not want to negate those positive relationships.

However, our county has also been in situations where the lack of timely assistance from the Service has been a detriment, as in dealing with potential flood and fire situations over the past decade. Also, as this Board's representative on the current Blue Ribbon Fire Commission, I have heard first hand about the desperate need for timely approval of critical fuel reduction measures in our mountainous areas. We are currently dealing with the most severe fire threat ever faced in our county due to the tree mortality situation. It is only prudent that we work with our federal elected officials to be sure that we are doing all we can to be prepared. I urge your support for adopting this resolution, and ask that our Executive Office forward this to Congressman Calvert and all our federal legislators, as well as our Washington lobbyist.

Jim Venable, Supervisor

JV:msm

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RECEIVED BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA

2 **RESOLUTION NO. 2004- 045**

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4 **RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF A CONGRESSIONAL HEARING RELATIVE TO THE UNITED**
5 **STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**

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7 **WHEREAS**, Congressman Ken Calvert has called for an investigation of the U.S. Fish and
8 Wildlife Service, which has been criticized in recent weeks for its opposition to prescribed burns in the
9 years before the catastrophic Old and Grand Prix Fires, and;

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11 **WHEREAS**, Congressman Calvert has submitted a letter to House Resource Committee
12 Chairman Richard Pombo requesting that congressional hearings be held to investigate the matter, and;

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14 **WHEREAS**, over the past decade the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service either rejected or
15 significantly delayed at least nine projects intended to reduce the threat of wildfire posed to communities
16 adjacent to the drought-stricken San Bernardino National Forest, and;

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18 **WHEREAS**, top forestry officials have stated that prescribed fires might have helped save
19 homes from these devastating fires and;

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21 **WHEREAS**, similar past rejections and delays from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have
22 exacerbated emergency situations in Riverside County including: lack of clearance from the Service to
23 clear the Temecula Creek caused severe flooding in the City of Temecula; lack of clearance to disk the
24 land allowed severe spread of wildland fire in the Winchester area; and difficulty in getting timely
25 permission to do the fire clearance in the "Strawberry Fuel Break" put the mountain communities near
26 Idyllwild at greater risk during a severe fire season, and;

