

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



FROM: Supervisor Jeff Stone

SUBMITTAL DATE: November 15, 2005

SUBJECT: Resolution No. 2005-488, Strongly Urging the California Department of Forestry to Maintain Their Air Attack Base Operations at the Hemet-Ryan Airport

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Supervisors adopt Resolution No. 2005-488.

BACKGROUND:

Hemet-Ryan Airport, which is a public General Aviation airport, owned and operated by the County of Riverside, has supported an aerial firefighting/attack base ("air attack base") since 1967 and is the most active aerial firefighting base in the Country. The California Department of Forestry (CDF) has an established air attack base currently in operation at Hemet-Ryan Airport with four permanently based aircraft, providing initial attack services to over 830,000 acres of land in Riverside County and neighboring counties that is the State of California's responsibility, as well as hundreds of thousands of acres of land that are Federal and local responsibility. According to CDF, the climate, topography, fuels and weather in the area served by the air attack base at Hemet-Ryan Airport includes some of the most seriously imperiled land in the State. Hemet-Ryan Airport is located in an area that is not typically affected by the climatic factors that reduce flying hours (e.g. high winds, fog, smog, etc.), particularly during peak fire season, allowing minimal response times to the most vulnerable areas in the County of Riverside.

Relocation of the air attack base to any other facility would have a significant adverse impact upon aerial firefighting service for approximately 190,500 acres in Riverside County that are considered to be at very high risk. Utilizing another facility, whether in Riverside County or in any neighboring county, would increase response times by ten minutes or more, a critical factor in the success or failure in initial attack response.

The adoption of Resolution #2005-488 will support the retention of the CDF Air Attack Base at Hemet-Ryan Airport, significantly minimizing the potential loss of life and property for the residents of Riverside County as well as residents of neighboring counties.



Jeff Stone
Supervisor
Third District

JS:

1 RESOLUTION NO. 2005-488
2 RESOLUTION STRONGLY URGING THE CALIFORNIA
3 DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY TO MAINTAIN
4 THEIR AIR ATTACK BASE OPERATIONS
5 AT THE HEMET-RYAN AIRPORT

6 Whereas, Riverside County has contracted with the California
7 Department of Forestry (herein referred to as CDF) for fire
8 services in Riverside County since 1921; and

9 Whereas, Riverside County has a strong appreciation for the
10 dedicated personnel that continually put their lives in harms way
11 for the protection of private and public property, and more
12 importantly, to aid and save the lives and properties of our
13 constituents; and

14 Whereas, Riverside County has partnered with CDF in
15 providing space for an Air Attack Base at Hemet-Ryan Airport for
16 decades; and

17 Whereas, having this Air Attack Base strategically placed at
18 Hemet-Ryan has successfully prevented small fires from becoming
19 fire failures in more than 90 percent of fire responses; and

20 Whereas, moving this Air Attack Base to March Air Reserve
21 Base could leave some of the most fire vulnerable lands in
22 Riverside County, that are not as accessible via ground
23 operations, more susceptible to higher incidences of wild fires
24 jeopardizing the health and welfare of Riverside County
25 constituents; and

26 Whereas, the County of Riverside will work cooperatively
27 with CDF to build the appropriate infrastructure that will
28 enhance air attack operations at Hemet-Ryan; and

 Whereas, Supervisorial District 3 and District 4 have
 committed significant redevelopment funds to pay for such vital
 infrastructure; and

 Whereas, Hemet-Ryan Airport has accommodated more fire
 fighting aircraft at any one time during one fire incident than
 any other Air Attack Base in the State of California, including
 23 airplanes; and

 Whereas, the County of Riverside's Aviation Division will
 continue to work cooperatively with the City of Hemet and all
 other environmental agencies to complete the design and
 construction of the runway extension to 6000' by the projected

1 completion date of late/2007; and

2 Whereas, in light of all comments and studies presented
3 before this Board to date;

4 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, FOUND AND DETERMINED, that the
5 Riverside County Board of Supervisors, in the best interest of
6 public safety for all County of Riverside residents, hereby
7 strongly encourages CDF to cease plans to move to March Air
8 Reserve Base, and continue to maintain their successful and rapid
9 response air attacker base at Hemet-Ryan Airport and work closely
10 with County of Riverside's Aviation Division and Planning
11 Department, to plan and deliver the needed infrastructure to
12 update the existing base operations.
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