

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA



PUBLIC COMMENT:

16.2

During the oral communication section of the agenda for Tuesday, July 2, 2019, Susan Nash spoke regarding the Emergency Plan.

**ATTACHMENTS FILED WITH
CLERK OF THE BOARD**

**AGENDA NO.
16.2**

**Riverside County Board of Supervisors
Request to Speak**

Submit request to Clerk of Board (right of podium),
Speakers are entitled to three (3) minutes, subject
to Board Rules listed on the reverse side of this
form.

SPEAKER'S NAME: Susan Nash

Address: _____

City: Idyllwild CA **Zip:** 92549

Phone #: 909-228-6710

Date: 2 July 19 **Agenda #** 16

PLEASE STATE YOUR POSITION BELOW:

Idyllwild Emergency Evacuation
Position on "Regular" (non-appealed) Agenda Item:

Plan

Support **Oppose** **Neutral**

Note: If you are here for an agenda item that is filed
for "Appeal", please state separately your position on
the appeal below:

Support **Oppose** **Neutral**

I give my 3 minutes to: _____

BOARD RULES

Requests to Address Board on "Agenda" Items:

You may request to be heard on a published agenda item. Requests to be heard must be submitted to the Clerk of the Board before the scheduled meeting time.

Requests to Address Board on items that are "NOT" on the Agenda/Public Comment:

Notwithstanding any other provisions of these rules, a member of the public shall have the right to address the Board during the mid-morning "Oral Communications" segment of the published agenda. Said purpose for address must pertain to issues which are under the direct jurisdiction of the Board of Supervisors. YOUR TIME WILL BE LIMITED TO THREE (3) MINUTES. Donated time is not permitted during Public Comment.

Power Point Presentations/Printed Material:

Speakers who intend to conduct a formalized Power Point presentation or provide printed material must notify the Clerk of the Board's Office by 12 noon on the Monday preceding the Tuesday Board meeting, insuring that the Clerk's Office has sufficient copies of all printed materials and at least one (1) copy of the Power Point CD. Copies of printed material given to the Clerk (by Monday noon deadline) will be provided to each Supervisor. If you have the need to use the overhead "Elmo" projector at the Board meeting, please ensure your material is clear and with proper contrast, notifying the Clerk well ahead of the meeting, of your intent to use the Elmo.

Individual Speaker Limits:

Individual speakers are limited to a maximum of three (3) minutes.

Please step up to the podium when the Chairman calls your name and begin speaking immediately. Pull the microphone to your mouth so that the Board, audience, and audio recording system hear you clearly. Once you start speaking, the "green" podium light will light. The "yellow" light will come on when you have one (1) minute remaining. When you have 30 seconds remaining, the "yellow" light will begin to flash, indicating you must quickly wrap up your comments. Your time is up when the "red" light flashes. The Chairman adheres to a strict three (3) minutes per speaker. **Note: If you intend to give your time to a "Group/Organized Presentation", please state so clearly at the very bottom of the reverse side of this form.**

Group/Organized Presentations:

Group/organized presentations with more than one (1) speaker will be limited to nine (9) minutes at the Chairman's discretion. The organizer of the presentation will automatically receive the first three (3) minutes, with the remaining six (6) minutes relinquished by other speakers, as requested by them on a completed "Request to Speak" form, and clearly indicated at the bottom of the form.

Addressing the Board & Acknowledgement by Chairman:

The Chairman will determine what order the speakers will address the Board, and will call on all speakers in pairs. The first speaker should immediately step to the podium and begin addressing the Board. The second speaker should take up a position in one of the chamber aisles in order to quickly step up to the podium after the preceding speaker. This is to afford an efficient and timely Board meeting, giving all attendees the opportunity to make their case. Speakers are prohibited from making personal attacks, and/or using coarse, crude, profane or vulgar language while speaking to the Board members, staff, the general public and/or meeting participants. Such behavior, at the discretion of the Board Chairman, may result in removal from the Board Chambers by Sheriff Deputies.

State is 'an arsonist's dream'

Worries mount as California braces for fire season



CHAD HANSON points to the danger from overgrown trees in the Big Bear area. (Irfan Khan Los Angeles Times)

BY LOUIS SAHAGUN AND JOSEPH SERNA

In Big Bear Lake, officials worry about an explosive wildfire roaring through the resort city, trapping tens of thousands of people.

In the Santa Monica Mountains, authorities stage a mock evacuation in Mandeville Canyon, where police discover they are too slow to rescue residents from a wildfire disaster.

And in the thick forest of the San Jacinto Mountains, an Idyllwild resident laments that his town "resembles an arsonist's dream."

Submitted by *Susan Hart*

7-2-19 Item *Public Comment*
(date)

On the heels of the deadliest and most destructive wildfire season in state history, officials across California are growing increasingly anxious over what many fear will be another one.

Fire experts and climatologists warn that the heavy rains of recent months produced an excess of vegetation, which over the hot summer will become dry fuel. At the same time, the death toll from last fall's Camp and Woolsey fires — and the Tubbs fire the year before that — has highlighted the vulnerability of communities throughout the state.

In a meeting with emergency managers recently, Gov. Gavin Newsom urged officials to “prepare for the worst” and then gave voice to a growing sense of dread.

“We just can't take this anymore,” Newsom told the gathering. “The state can't take 2018 again. Can't do 2017.... We can't take it anymore.”

After the Camp fire killed 85 people in and around the town of Paradise — and revealed glaring shortcomings in municipal evacuation plans — the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection conducted a risk assessment that found an estimated 11 million residents, or 1 in 4 Californians, live in areas considered to be at “high risk” of a wildfire.

“I anticipate there's a whole lot of people in suburban Southern California, and frankly in the Bay Area, that would never consider themselves a part of that ‘1 out of 4 Californians that live in a fire risk area,’ but they actually do,” said Wade Crowfoot, head of the California Natural Resources Agency.

Sleeping giants

When it comes to the risk of forest fire in Southern California, Richard Minnich, a fire ecologist at UC Riverside, said he is most concerned about communities that haven't burned since the 19th century: Big Bear Lake and Lake Arrowhead in the eastern San Bernardino Mountains, and the isolated, mile-high community of Idyllwild.

These areas, he said, have hundreds of trees per acre with trunks more than 4 inches in diameter and an understory of young conifers and brush. By way of comparison, he said, a healthy, safer forest has about 13 such trees per acre.

In the event of a fire, the heavy understory would create what foresters call a “fuel ladder” that would send flames up into the canopy, triggering a massive blaze.

In Idyllwild, authorities have been sounding the alarm for years about the buildup of tinder-dry trees and brush.

“My town still resembles an arsonist's dream,” resident Mark Yardas said.

Risk management

For all the urgency local and state officials are bringing into fire preparations this year, their methods for reducing the risks are nothing new.

“Near highways, we'll probably do a combination of handwork and machine work: bulldozers, masticators, things like that,” said John Melvin, Cal Fire's chief for resource protection and improvement. “It's tried-and-true methods. What we're doing is greatly increasing the pace and scale, and we have more resources to do that.”

Indeed, the National Guard troops that President Trump requested for border duty, and that Newsom recalled, are now working on fire breaks, Melvin said.

But a growing chorus of environmental advocates and some former fire officials is urging the state to shift its wildfire strategy to one that “starts from the home outward.” That means using fire-safe roofing materials and vent screens in homes and pruning vegetation within a 100-foot radius of residences, among other things.

The state’s current strategy — which relies primarily on altering forestland — is costly financially and environmentally, they argue. It also has failed to prevent deaths and massive property loss in extreme, wind-driven fire events such as the Camp and Tubbs fires — which together killed more than 100 people.

“Studies show that the principal cause of residential destruction is not the result of high-intensity wildfire engulfing homes,” said Big Bear Lake resident and ecologist Chad Hanson. “Instead, home ignitions are due to showers of firebrands landing on flammable materials or on nearby vegetation. After that, one burning home sets fire to another and another.”

During a recent walk down a shady lane in Sugarloaf — a densely populated neighborhood whose streets are arranged in a grid pattern — Hanson gestured toward a clutch of homes.

“Everywhere you look, there are piles of dry pine needles on deteriorating shake shingle roofs and thick brush growing against walls made of wooden planks,” Hanson said.

“I understand the comfort in people’s voices when they say: ‘The Forest Service plans to thin the forests around here. So, we’ll be OK,’ ” he said. “But they are wrong.”

Less than a block away, Amanda Mayer, 38, was striding beneath the branches of a 30-foot-tall oak tree draped over the veranda and roof of a wood-sided Victorian-style home she shares with her family.

“Everybody knows this tree is too close to the house,” she said. “But this is a pretty poor community. Many of us have to work two jobs to get by. So, the idea of paying someone tons of money to trim this tree is not high on my priority list right now.”

Little response time

On a recent rainy Sunday in Mandeville Canyon, Los Angeles police officers moved from house to house as part of an elaborate evacuation drill.

As part of a scripted scenario, officers told residents that a fire had broken out nearby, amid 25- to 35-mph winds with gusts up to 40 mph. Residents had two hours to clear out before a shower of embers, and then flames, arrived.

But as officers made their way up the canyon, the fire prevented them from reaching residents to the north. As a result, first responders scrambled to transform their simulated evacuation drill into a simulated rescue mission.

Among those residents who attended the drill was Maureen Levinson.

Although she lives in Bel-Air, she said she felt compelled to attend the event after watching images of the Woolsey fire, which ripped through Ventura and Los Angeles counties and devastated Malibu.

She and her neighbors were heartbroken when they watched video of homes burning but saw no firetrucks nearby.

The lesson was clear, she said.