



ORANGE COUNTY
PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION
IAFF LOCAL 3631

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Attachment B

B

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May 21, 2019

The Honorable Senator Bill Dodd
Chair, Senate Standing Committee
on Governmental Organization
1020 N Street, Room 584
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SUPPORT FUNDING for AlertWildfire Fire Cameras

Dear Mr. Chairman,

I am writing to you on behalf of the men and women of the Orange County Professional Firefighters Association (OCPFA), IAFF Local 3631, representing over 1000 firefighters in 23 cities throughout Orange County. The OCPFA strongly supports the AlertWildfire fire cameras and respectfully requests your sponsorship on this important life-saving technology.

As you know, every year massive wild fires sweep across California with greater severity and frequency. These new fires are proving more formidable than their predecessors, with a greater degree of destruction to our communities and an amplified life safety risk to our citizens and our firefighters. Real time confirmation is critical in containing fires in their initial, incipient stage.

State-of-the-art Pan-Tilt-Zoom (PTZ) fire camera technology now exists and can play a critical role in helping firefighters and first responders. This new camera technology gives us real time information on what is happening across California, and on a clear day these cameras can see up to 70 miles away. The cameras can confirm wildfires and alert fire agencies prior to a fire spreading beyond a containable size. In short, these new cameras have been called 'game changers' by first responders, by keeping small fires small.

An added advantage of early fire detection and suppression is a vast reduction in the incredible level of CO2 generated by these mega fires. These added emissions can easily undermine years' worth of our state's ongoing efforts toward reducing carbon emissions.

These new fire cameras are critical in supporting our firefighters in their efforts toward:

- (1) Confirmation and location of a new fire
- (2) Real time operational intel of a fire's size, rate of spread and direction of travel
- (3) More effective and faster deployment of ground and air resources
- (4) Conducting early evacuations through enhanced situational awareness
- (5) Ensuring that contained fires are monitored appropriately through their demise

During the past three fire seasons, these cameras have provided critical information for hundreds of fires, including the Lilac, Wall, Whittier, Thomas, Tule, Woodchuck, Earthstone,

Representing Professional Firefighters protecting the cities of:

Buena Park • Cypress • Dana Point • Irvine • Laguna Hills • Laguna Niguel • Laguna Woods • Lake Forest • La Palma • Los Alamitos
Mission Viejo • Placentia • Rancho Santa Margarita • San Clemente • San Juan Capistrano • Santa Ana • Seal Beach • Stanton • Tustin • Villa Park
Westminster • Yorba Linda • Unincorporated Orange County

Truckee, Draw, Snowstorm, Hot Pot, and Emerald fires, as well as an arson spree in Lake Tahoe.

In late 2017, the devastating North Bay Complex and Thomas fires brought into sharp focus the need to quickly expand wild fire camera coverage across California.

In August 2018, when the 23,000-acre Holy Fire threatened Orange County's residents, the Orange County Fire Authority used these fire cameras to confirm the fire's location, direction of travel, and forward rate of spread. Many days after the fire was declared under control, the fire cameras were again employed to validate a new flare up on top of Santiago Peak. The OCFA was able to immediately call in state air resources, saving millions of dollars' worth of communication towers that serve multiple counties. It was all captured by new SoCal Edison cameras whose images helped firefighters battle the blaze.

The men and women who rely on this new technology know full well how important a role they play in protecting the public, as many of them live and work in the service areas where these cameras are located.

We strongly support California's effort to deploy these cameras statewide so that lives, property, and the environment are better protected.

Funding for this effort has our full support.

Sincerely,

R. Todd Baldrige, MPS
Political Affairs Director
Orange County Professional Firefighters
IAFF Local 3631

cc:

Senator Scott Wilk (Vice Chair)
Senator Benjamin Allen
Senator Bob Archuleta
Senator Andreas Borgeas
Senator Steven Bradford
Senator Ling Ling Chang
Senator Cathleen Galgiani
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