



## Legislation Text

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Chief Administrative Office providing clarification of new Request for Proposal options for Title III funding as previously directed by the Board on June 2, 2009.

Background: On February 10, 2009 the Board directed that the entire FY 2008-09 Title III allocation be distributed according to a Request for Proposal (RFP) process. The FY 2008-09 allocation is \$272,063. The Board further directed that the FY 2009-10 allocation be directed to the Sheriff for Search and Rescue.

As a result of the February 10 Board direction, the Chief Administrative Office issued an RFP for Fire Prevention and Planning. Following the close of the Title III RFP it became clear that the El Dorado County Fire Safe Council interpreted the Board's February 10, 2009 action differently than the Chief Administrative Office.

On June 2, 2009 the Chief Administrative Office sought clarification from the Board on its intentions for the distribution of Title III funds. As a result of this discussion the Board:

- 1) Directed staff to discontinue the current RFP; and
- 2) Directed staff to return to the Board for clarification of the new RFP process including the criteria and selection process.

Attempting to identify a more robust evaluation criteria and selection process, the Chief Administrative Office explored several different alternatives and presents the following options for the Board's consideration:

### Option 1: County issued RFP incorporating Board adopted priorities

Issue a new Title III RFP requiring all projects to comply with the goals of the Board adopted County Wildfire Protection Plan.

On March 25, 2005 the Board of Supervisors adopted the El Dorado County Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP). In addition, on March 24, 2009 the Board amended the Public Health, Safety and Noise Element of the General Plan to incorporate the LHMP. The LHMP includes the El Dorado County Wildfire Protection Plan.

Requiring all potential Title III projects to comply with the fire prevention and planning goals as expressed by the Board through the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and County Wildfire Protection Plan may provide more defined criteria from which to evaluate proposed projects.

Evaluation and recommendation of proposed projects could potentially be accomplished through the Local Disaster Assistance Council. The Council is charged with updating the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. The voting membership of the Council consists of five Board appointed representatives as well as one representative each from the cities of Placerville and South Lake Tahoe. Appointees and

representatives typically have varying levels of expertise in disaster and hazard mitigation. In addition, although attendance and participation is voluntary, the Council is assisted by over 30 different County, state, local and non-profit organizations involved in disaster response and hazard mitigation.

Advantages of Option 1 are that the evaluation criteria for Title III projects will more closely revolve around fire prevention and planning priorities as adopted by the Board, and that the pool of experts evaluating projects will include Board appointees and a deep reserve of additional experts.

A disadvantage of Option 1 is that the Local Disaster Council has not approved participation in this effort. Although the Chief Administrative Office has discussed the concept with individuals involved with the Council, the Council itself does not meet until mid-August and is consequently not yet in a position to commit to this project. A second significant disadvantage is that the Council only meets every two months. With this meeting schedule it is very unlikely that the FY 2008-09 Title III money could be spent in the current fire season when it is critically needed.

Finally, the Chief Administrative Office notes that the Board-adopted County Wildfire Protection Plan was originally crafted and is currently maintained by the El Dorado County Fire Safe Council.

#### Option 2: Allow the El Dorado County Fire Safe Council to allocate the Title III funds

The Board could direct the entire FY 2008-09 Title III allocation to the El Dorado County Fire Safe Council and allow it to distribute funds. Essentially, the EDC Fire Safe Council would act as a clearinghouse for the County's Title III allocation.

The EDC Fire Safe Council proposes to solicit proposals from other organizations and establish a committee of foresters and other fire prevention professionals to review and recommend projects to its Board of Directors in context of the Secure Rural School and Community Self-Determination Act, Firewise Communities public education and the El Dorado County Wildfire Protection Plan. The Board of Directors includes representatives and experts from Satellite Fire Safe Councils. Many of the organizations represented on the EDC Fire Safe Council Board of Directors have received past Title III funding, or are currently competing for a piece of the FY 2008-09 allocation.

The EDC Fire Safe Council does have some history of developing Title III funding recommendations. Before the creation of the Title III RFP process, from 2002 through 2004 the EDC Fire Safe Council requested proposals from key fire prevention organizations and worked with the Chief Administrative Office and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) to develop recommendations for the Board of Supervisors. In addition, the Board adopted Local Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies the EDC Fire Safe Council (EDCFSC) as a focal point for bringing citizens and protection agencies together to plan and accomplish fire safe measures, and formally established a public education role for the EDCFSC.

Awarding all of the Title III funds to a single entity has several advantages. First, the money will be spent more expeditiously through a Fire Safe Council process than through a county RFP process which could add several more months to the process of allocating the FY 2008-09 Title III funds. There would be only one funding agreement required instead of several. In addition, the Fire Safe Council is a representative body of many fire community stakeholders. As a result it will be able to

quickly identify critical countywide fire prevention priorities. Finally, since the EDC Fire Safe Council Board of Directors includes delegates from organizations competing for the same funds, allowing the Council to make funding decisions may increase collaboration amongst otherwise competing groups.

A potential disadvantage of Option II is that the EDC Fire Safe Council Board of Directors does not include representation from the Tahoe Basin. However, the Council has worked collaboratively with Tahoe area fire organizations in the past.

### Option 3:

Recognizing that the EDC Fire Safe Council does not include formal representation from Tahoe area organizations, a third option would be to divide the Title III allocation between the EDC Fire Safe Council and the Nevada Fire Safe Council.

The Nevada Fire Safe Council performs many of the same functions on the East Slope of the County as the EDC Fire Safe Council performs on the West Slope. Although past Board action relative to the adoption of the County Wildfire Protection Plan seems to have more formally recognized the EDC Fire Safe Council's central role for fire prevention and planning countywide, the Board may want to consider utilizing the Nevada Fire Safe Council in a similar "clearinghouse" fashion for projects specifically on the East Slope. Should the Board pursue this Option, any agreement with the Nevada Fire Safe Council should make certain that Title III funds are only to be spent in the El Dorado County portion of the Tahoe Basin.

Action to be taken following Board approval: Chief Administrative Office to carryout Board direction.

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