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Placer Counties and the Town of Truckee*

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November 30, 2022

TO: Board of Directors of the Truckee Tahoe Airport District

FROM: Kevin McKechnie, Fire Chief Truckee Fire Protection District

SUBJECT: Regional Training Facility Partnership Presentation

The purpose of our presentation today is to see if the Truckee Tahoe Airport District is interested in becoming a partner in the development of a regional training facility.

We have been trying to develop a training facility for quite some time now. We have had renderings drawn at our current facilities and we have employed portable, temporary facilities, and most recently, we have developed schematic plans with the Airport District, Mead and Hunt and Ward Young Architects as part of the Truckee Public Agency Partnership Multiple Site Planning Study. Unfortunately, we have yet to find a landing spot for this regional facility.

Currently, we travel to execute this important training. We go to Carson City for live fire training, San Bernardino for aircraft rescue and firefighting, and Roseville for hazardous materials. These out of area trainings can be costly. There are expenses for the class and facility rental, travel expense and backfill needed to staff the district with overtime. Having a local facility would help defray the costs for this valuable and necessary training while increasing accessibility and frequency.

I would like to touch on the importance of training for our firefighters. Firefighting is a vocation that must be continually honed and maintained. It is really important to test ourselves along with our protective gear and equipment on a routine basis. We operate at the point of failure in unplanned and extremely dangerous conditions, emergent circumstances where life and property hang in the balance. Firefighters must be able to operate in these conditions competently and with confidence in themselves and their team. How is this achieved? With training of course, but not just any training. Training that is as close as possible to the challenging conditions that firefighters will encounter.

As the Fire Chief, my highest priority is the safety and wellbeing of our firefighters. It's not hard for me to arrive at this conclusion because if we are not doing our job in a manner that allows us to do it again tomorrow, then we are doing it wrong. A key and irreplaceable element of firefighter safety is training.

After ensuring crew safety I focus my efforts on community safety including hazard identification and risk mitigation. And this is where I believe we can align our missions for the benefit of the entire region with the development of a training facility. One of the things that I love about Truckee is all the critical infrastructure that resides in and transits our town. It provides the basis for our economy and the lifestyle that we enjoy. As firefighters, we love serving this community with all the dynamic complexity that the infrastructure brings. However, as Fire Chief my attention is drawn towards the potential impacts and hazards that might be imposed on the community and responders from the infrastructure. When these other facilities are compared to the fire district, we find different boundaries and areas of service and benefit. We find different funding sources and mechanisms for revenue. We know that these critical infrastructure facilities consume our finite fire protection resources. And these unique facilities increase the hazard profile of the community. I fear these impacts, if left unmitigated, may expose a fire department that is too small and not properly equipped or prepared for the needs of the community. A regional training facility with collaboration and cross-training between service providers and responders would be a great first step towards mitigation and long-term community resiliency through partnership.

Thank you for your time and please let us know if you have any questions.

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