Board of Directors Annexation Letter

Good evening board, ladies and gentleman of the community, my name is Miguel Carvajal and I am a firefighter with the Rodeo Hercules Fire District. I have been with the district a little over four years and am writing this letter to you tonight, in favor of the annexation of our department with Contra Costa County Fire District. Since I was hired back in 2017 I have noticed and experienced the short comings of this department and the areas that we as a small district lacked, the ultimately affects our safety and the level of service that we provide to the community.

First off the depth and personnel to have a sufficient training staff is not feasible with an 18 personnel department. Without that depth of a full-fledged training department we as Rodeo Hercules have outdated standards, lack of resources, and insufficient amounts of supervisors to receive the proper training that a professional paid department needs as well as the requirements from the state. Training is one of the biggest aspects of our job as it prepares us to respond to a vast majority of emergency calls and make important decisions with limited amounts of time to return safely to our family and friends as well as provide a high level of service to the community. Its not the fault of our fire chief and staff of these issues, they do an amazing job everyday to provide as much support to us as the operations side of things. They just do not have the resources, finances, or personnel to meet these needs.

The growth of Hercules and the town of Rodeo is another key topic to push towards the possibility of annexation. The call volume and the expansion of the area will continue to grow, not allowing us as 18 individuals to preform our everyday tasks answering the calls and training as well as the pre-planned steps we take to try to take and mitigate the emergencies from happening in the first place. I'm here to tell you that Contra Costa County Fire has these specialized divisions in place that currently do an amazing job mitigating and pre planning

emergencies. For example they have a fire prevention division, fire investigation division, training division, EMS divisions, operations divisions, and fuel mitigation division as working with their sole responsibilities to be community risk reduction. Currently in our RHFD model with our 18 line personnel staff we try and coordinate and facilitate these areas of responsibility as well as train, and answer the calls as they come in, this can be stressful and tasking and doesn't allow us to fully commit to our service of the community.

Depth of personnel is also a very important topic as to why annexation will be beneficial and help keep staffing levels at a minimum standard or better. The year 2020 presented many challenges facing a global pandemic, and uncertainty of where the fire service was headed. Within our department we saw a drastic dip in personnel due to long term injuries of our personnel leaving the department with 10 eligible employees to maintain the stations. Of those 10 employees only 2 were paramedics and were constantly tasked to their maximum allotted amount of time to work week after week. Multiple days even occurred were we couldn't staff a paramedic on the engines and ran in a basic life support setting, a mentality that we as RHFD dislike and discourage because now we are servicing our citizens at a lower level than what they are paying for. If annexed into Contra Costa County that depth issue will no longer play a factor as, CCCFPD up staffs and continually relies on the depth of their 309 firefighters to evenly share the load and maintain the highest level of service to the community.

So I urge you Board Members; as I write this as a current firefighter of Rodeo Hercules and as a citizen within Contra Costa County to please follow the facts, listen to the leadership within the fire service and see that annexation is the safest and financially feasible plan set before you to provide the most professional fire services to your communities. Thank You

-Miguel Carvajal