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**Subject:**

FW: [External] Prop. 64 – Funding for local emergency response services

**From:** Lou Paulson <[ahoward@cpf.org](mailto:ahoward@cpf.org)>

**Date:** March 22, 2017 at 12:30:49 PM PDT

**To:** Mayor Bailey <[rbailey@riversideca.gov](mailto:rbailey@riversideca.gov)>

**Subject:** [External] **Prop. 64 – Funding for local emergency response services**

**Reply-To:** Lou Paulson <[ahoward@cpf.org](mailto:ahoward@cpf.org)>



Dear Mayor Bailey,

**California Professional Firefighters (CPF)**, representing over 30,000 career firefighting and emergency medical service personnel statewide, appreciates this opportunity to submit the following for your thoughtful consideration relative to implementing Proposition 64, which was approved by voters last November.

As you know, Prop. 64's provisions include new, specified taxes and fees on the cultivation and sale of marijuana in California. Local governments retain authority to regulate marijuana production, distribution and sales and in doing so, may elect to establish local tax rules which, at their discretion, can apply to both medical and nonmedical marijuana.

**When you consider such taxes and fees on the industry to compensate for community impacts, we encourage you to keep emergency medical, fire protection, and fire response services at the forefront of any funding decisions that you make. There is strong evidence that these core safety services will be significantly impacted and will face additional demand as a result of Prop. 64's enactment.**

On the fire response side, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) identifies a number of unique fire and life safety issues inherent in marijuana production: Increased fires caused by powerful, low-hanging lights used against a backdrop of plastic dividers, combustible interior finishes, high electrical loads, and illegal locks; elevated levels of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) assisting in plant growth; use of toxic chemicals in fumigating grow rooms; an increase in explosions involving illegal hash oil production.

Fire prevention services will be similarly impacted. Fire departments will be called on to inspect more marijuana growth, processing and extraction facilities. Owners of such facilities – some of whom may be transitioning from illegal to legal cultivation – could fail to address code violations. This further increases fire and life safety risks and will likely require fire inspectors to spend more of their time mitigating marijuana-related legal issues.

Marijuana legalization also has been shown to have an impact on EMS response. Recent evidence collected on the experience in Colorado identifies several: Toxicity-related traumatic injuries, including traffic collisions resulting from altered perception and motor control; burns from butane hash oil production; pediatric accidental ingestion and increased heroin use and overdose (per a report in the Journal of Emergency Medical Services).

Make no mistake ... There will be challenges to our emergency response networks, resulting from this new industry. If firefighters and fire agencies are not staffed, equipped and trained accordingly, California's communities will incur an increase in associated deaths, injuries, and property and financial losses. Whether you maintain a city fire department or your city relies on another agency -- such an independent fire district or CAL FIRE via a cooperative fire protection agreement -- these critical partnerships should not be put at risk in the wake of Prop. 64.

Now more than ever, our emergency response networks must be properly

supported. We believe there is an opportunity for us to work together to play a key role in shaping the evolution of this industry in our communities. In doing so, we can strengthen the safety of the public, as well as the safety of our firefighters.

**For these reasons, we ask that you make emergency medical, fire protection, and fire response services a funding priority when assessing your community's public safety needs and demands as a result of the enactment of Prop. 64.**



Lou Paulson  
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