

December 29, 2023

Wade Crowfoot, Secretary
California Natural Resources Agency
715 P Street, 20th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Secretary Wade Crowfoot,

In accordance with the State Leadership Accountability Act (Leadership Accountability), the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection submits this report on the review of our internal control and monitoring systems for the biennial period ending December 31, 2023.

Should you have any questions please contact Windy C. Bouldin, Deputy Director, Office of Program Accountability, at (916) 902-5086, windy.bouldin@fire.ca.gov.

GOVERNANCE

Mission and Strategic Plan

The mission of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) is to serve and safeguard the people and protect the property and resources of California.

CAL FIRE organizationally reports to the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA), whose mission is to restore, protect, and manage the State's natural, historical, and cultural resources for current and future generations using creative approaches and solutions based on science, collaboration, and respect for all the communities and interests involved.

CAL FIRE is an emergency response and resource protection Department comprised of more than 12,000 permanent and seasonal employees and thousands of other affiliates responsible for protecting over 31 million acres of California's privately-owned wildlands. CAL FIRE also provides varied emergency services in 36 of the State's 58 counties via contracts with local governments.

CAL FIRE's 2019 Strategic Plan, posted internally and externally, reiterates the Department's priorities, focus, energy, and resources. CAL FIRE's vision is to be the leader in providing fire prevention and protection, emergency response, and enhancement of natural resource systems.

CAL FIRE's values are intrinsic to how the Department performs its public service:

Service

- We are committed to the safety and well-being of the public and our employees.
- We strive for excellence and professionalism.
- We are devoted and humble in the execution of our duties.

Cooperation

- We care about each other and our service to others, including cooperators, governing bodies, and the public.
- We build and maintain cooperative relationships across the State and beyond to benefit the public we serve.
- We afford every employee of the Department a voice within a chain of command structure.

Protection

- We integrate fire protection, natural resource management, and fire prevention under a single mission on behalf of the State and local communities.
- We strive to ensure the highest level of environmental protection in all our programs and operations.

Organizational Excellence

- We value diversity among our employees and the vital functions they perform to enhance the delivery of our mission.
- We are calm, and resilient, and we perform optimally in the face of emergencies and disasters of any scale.
- We recognize the importance of clear and consistent communication.
- We embrace and support innovation.

The Department continues to focus on its four goals—all equally important and acted on simultaneously:

Goal 1 – Improve Core Capabilities

- Analyze and integrate core operation functions at all levels of the Department.
- Evaluate and improve existing emergency response capabilities.
- Expand forestry and fire prevention through effective natural resource management programs, education, inspections, and land use planning.
- Strengthen post-incident assessments to create long-term improvements.

Goal 2 – Enhance Internal Operations

- Analyze business support functions and improve operational efficiencies.
- Define and effectively manage internal communication processes.
- Review and update communication processes to all external stakeholders.
- Create a secure, responsive, and integrated user-centric technology culture.
- Manage fiscal challenges to ensure adequate funding for critical programs.

Goal 3 – Ensure Health and Safety

- Promote employee behavioral health and physical fitness.
- Promote the safety of Department employees, partners, and the public.

Goal 4 – Build an Engaged, Motivated, Innovative Workforce

- Address skill gaps and barriers through creative outreach and recruiting.

- Create and implement detailed training plans for all.
- Retain the Department workforce through purposeful engagement.

CAL FIRE employees are encouraged to become familiar with the Department's 2019 Strategic Plan; however, work has also begun on developing the CAL FIRE Strategic Plan 2024—Transforming Tomorrow. The strategic plan development process began in Summer/Fall 2022 with the creation of an Executive Steering Committee and the hiring of a project manager. Efforts thus far have included, but are not limited to:

- The creation of a governance structure.
- Engagement of the Department's Executive Team (E-Team) comprised of the Directorate, Deputy Directors, Region Chiefs, the Assistant State Fire Marshal, and Chief Legal Counsel.
- Surveying both internal and external stakeholders.
- Engaging in numerous in-person and virtual stakeholder meetings and workshops.
- The creation of the Strategic Plan Working Group made up of members of the Department's Leadership Team (DLT). DLT is comprised of Assistant Deputy Directors, Assistant Regions Chiefs, and other members of senior leadership.
- The creation of the Front-Line Working Group to gather feedback for CAL FIRE Units.

Further, to ensure communication is available to all employees, the CAL FIRE intranet and public-facing website is updated regularly to host information on the efforts and progress of the CAL FIRE Strategic Plan 2024—Transforming Tomorrow.

This collaborative strategic planning process helps leverage diverse perspectives and will produce a more effective road map for the future.

CAL FIRE's Fire Protection program provides policy, direction, and oversight for meeting the Department's mission to deliver emergency services to the public. Fire Protection programs and Cooperative Fire, Safety, and Training units oversee the delivery systems and relationships necessary to carry out this task while ensuring the safety and training of CAL FIRE personnel.

In addition to the Department's emergency response operations, the mission of CAL FIRE's Resource Management program emphasizes the management and protection of California's natural resources. This is accomplished through ongoing assessments and study of the State's natural resources and a variety of programs including, but not limited to, several forestry assistance and grant programs, enforcement of California's forest practice regulations, and managing eight Demonstration State Forests that provide public recreation, forest research, and demonstration of good forest management practices.

CAL FIRE's Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) is comprised of multiple programs and divisions that meet the mission to protect life and property through the development and application of fire prevention engineering, education, and enforcement. This is accomplished by providing support through a wide variety of fire safety responsibilities including, but not limited to, regulating buildings in which people live, congregate, or are confined; by controlling substances and products which may, in and of themselves, or by their misuse, cause injuries, death, and destruction by fire; by providing statewide direction for fire prevention within wildland areas; by regulating hazardous liquid pipelines; by developing and

reviewing regulations and building standards; and by providing training and education in fire protection methods and responsibilities.

CAL FIRE's Management Services provides Departmental administration and executive leadership through policy direction and a variety of program support services necessary for the successful completion of the Department's mission. Central program support services are focused around human resources (HR), labor relations, and technical services.

CAL FIRE's Fiscal Services provides comprehensive management and coordination of all financial activities of the Department. Central program support services are focused around accounting and business services.

CAL FIRE's Technology Division is responsible for the planning, implementation, maintenance, and management of the Department's information technology infrastructure throughout the State. Central program support services are focused around information technology, information security, telecommunications, research, development, and innovation.

CAL FIRE's Communication Bureau provides pertinent information and education to people of all ages, in public forums, through the media and worldwide web, and the distribution and display of printed material. To support the CAL FIRE mission and to prevent wildfires before they happen, with education provided to the people of California, CAL FIRE can decrease the number of human-caused fires.

CAL FIRE's Professional Standards Program (PSP) supports the successful performance and retention of employees through consistency and best practices, utilizing policies, leadership, on-boarding, administrative investigations, and progressive discipline, thereby maintaining a well-trained and diverse workforce.

CAL FIRE's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) program is committed to ensuring equal employment opportunity for all employees, applicants for employment, and volunteers and for compliance with State and federal anti-discrimination laws. The goal of CAL FIRE's EEO program is to prevent unlawful discrimination, harassment, and retaliation and to resolve issues through education and corrective action. Whereas the mission of the DEI program is to integrate DEI into every facet of the Department; empowering and uplifting the workforce while nurturing authentic and cohesive partnerships within the diverse communities served.

CAL FIRE's Office of Legislation researches, evaluates, and analyzes legislation that impacts the Department. This includes monitoring State and federal legislation on specified issues affecting CAL FIRE programs, reviewing all bills introduced and amended in the State Legislature that may directly or indirectly affect the Department, and working with CAL FIRE program staff to identify the programmatic and fiscal impacts of legislation.

CAL FIRE's Legal Office's mission is to provide highly skilled, effective, and innovative legal representation by assisting program staff, representing the Department at various administrative hearings, reviewing documentation, providing general legal advice to CAL FIRE staff, and administering Public Records Act requests and subpoenas. The Legal Office also works with the Office of the Attorney General to file civil cost recovery actions on behalf of the

Department and defends the Department in legal matters by providing input and direction on strategy and case management, reviewing and revising pleadings, assisting with discovery requests and obtaining declarations, evaluating settlement offers, and obtaining settlement authority on cases.

CAL FIRE's Office of Program Accountability provides risk-based and independent objective assurance, advice, and insight through professional practices to offer value-added solutions. The Office of Program Accountability is also the Departmental liaison for external audits, compliance reviews, and the California Whistleblower Protection Act (CWPA) codified in [California Government Code \(GOV\) section 8547 et seq.](#)

The Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (BOF) is a government-appointed body within CAL FIRE. The BOF is responsible for developing the general forest policy of the State, determining the guidance policies of the Department, and representing the State's interest in federal forestland in California. Together, BOF and CAL FIRE work to carry out the State Legislature's mandate to protect and enhance the State's unique forest and wildland resources. The BOF is charged with protecting all wildland forest resources in California that are not under federal jurisdiction. These resources include major commercial and non-commercial stands of timber, areas reserved for parks and recreation, woodlands, brush-range watersheds, and all private and State lands that contribute to California's forest resource wealth.

The State Board of Fire Services (SBFS) is a 17-member advisory board to the OSFM. The SBFS is comprised of representatives of fire service labor, fire chiefs, fire districts, volunteer firefighters, city and county government, the Office of Emergency Services, and the insurance industry and is chaired by the California State Fire Marshal (SFM). The SBFS provides a forum for addressing fire protection and prevention issues of Statewide concern, develops technical and performance standards for training of fire service personnel, accredits curriculum, establishes policy for the certification system for the California Fire Service, advises the SFM on dissemination of regulations, and sits as an appeals board on the application of OSFM regulations.

Control Environment

Operationally, CAL FIRE is divided into Northern and Southern Regions, with Regional Operation Centers in Redding and Riverside, Regional Headquarters in Santa Rosa and Fresno, and Sacramento Headquarters. The two Regions coordinate with the 21 operational Units that span the State of California from the Oregon state line to the Mexico border. In addition to the 21 operational Units, the Department supports hundreds of fire stations, 30 Conservation Camps, 17 fire centers, 14 air attack, and ten helitack bases, as well as multiple Sacramento Headquarters programs.

CAL FIRE has delegation of certain functions (e.g., purchasing/procurement, hiring, examinations) through external control agencies and must meet the conditions for delegation. Because of these delegations, the Department is subject to periodic external audits and compliance reviews. Additionally, while some functions of the Department are centralized, a majority of others are decentralized due to operational needs and geography. Documentation of delegation is typically maintained by the Department's Legal Office.

CAL FIRE operates within a chain of command structure with limited exceptions (e.g., EEO, filing anonymous complaints of misconduct) and documents its organizational structure through organizational charts that reflect reporting relationships and relative ranks. Current organizational charts are maintained at the local level; however, annually, CAL FIRE submits a comprehensive set of organizational charts to the California Department of Human Resources (CalHR) as part of its delegation agreement. Additionally, CAL FIRE utilizes Position Essential Functions Duties Statements (PO-199s) to define position roles and responsibilities.

CAL FIRE employees are responsible for reviewing and signing the Department's Employee Code of Conduct (PO-227) (CAL FIRE 0800 Professional Standards and Employee Conduct Handbook) and the Departmental Incompatible Activities Statement (PO-155) (CAL FIRE 0800 Professional Standards and Employee Conduct Handbook). Acknowledgment and certification of various mandatory reviews and/or training are typically maintained in the Department's Statewide learning management system, in employee training files, and/or in official personnel files.

[The Political Reform Act, GOV sections 1090 et seq.](#), requires that officials or employees who are designated in a Department's Conflict-of-Interest Code must file a Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) Statement of Economic Interests (Form 700). All employees and consultants of a State Agency who are required to file an FPPC Form 700 are required to complete ethics training on a biennial basis through the Office of the Attorney General. Furthermore, CAL FIRE's business services office additionally requires Departmental certified purchasers to complete the Office of the Attorney General's ethics training. There are also classes administered through CAL FIRE's Training Center and through the State of California Training Center that provide instruction on ethics as well as various classes meeting mandated training requirements.

CAL FIRE employees are required to attend various EEO courses, familiarize themselves with the CAL FIRE 1400 Equal Employment Opportunity Handbook, and have access to employee rights and right-to-file signage in areas where employee notices are maintained. CAL FIRE EEO policy and procedures also outline the internal and external complaint processes. CAL FIRE employees have access to various avenues to file confidential internal employee complaints (e.g., a complaint telephone line and mailbox) maintained by the PSP, allowing employees the ability to bring forward concerns of workplace issues like unprofessional conduct. In addition, the general public also has an avenue to document a complaint against a CAL FIRE employee or a commendation of an employee's exceptional public service through a portal located on CAL FIRE's Internet. There are other internal and external venues and processes for State of California employees to report employment issues (e.g., workplace safety complaints, merit issue complaints, grievances).

CAL FIRE employees are made aware of the CWPA administered by the California State Auditor (CSA). The Department's Office of Program Accountability facilitates the annual posting of CWPA information at facilities where other employee notices are maintained, disseminates CWPA information to all CAL FIRE mailboxes (electronically), administers periodic compliance checks for postings, maintains updated information on the CAL FIRE intranet, and provides continued coordination/collaboration with the CSA and/or the California State Personnel Board (SPB) to address allegations of improper governmental activities and/or

associated retaliation.

CAL FIRE has a governance structure that includes the use of committees, councils, advisory groups, and working groups comprised of internal and, in some cases, external stakeholders. Depending on the governance body, members may be tasked with researching initiatives, addressing operational concerns, managing and/or overseeing specific functions, addressing areas of risk, and/or escalating recommendations to executive management.

CAL FIRE's variety of programs/functions are overseen by the Director and the Department's E-Team. E-Team is a diverse team of talented leaders who provide vision and strategic direction to support all of CAL FIRE and its mission through innovation, inclusion, and collaboration.

The DLT is a collaborative decision-making team empowered to advance ideas and provide timely, informed leadership direction and decision support to accomplish CAL FIRE's Mission, Vision, and Values. The role of Chairperson rotates on a one-year term and is selected by majority vote. Membership may be expanded or contracted to reflect CAL FIRE as an organization, with the overall objective of inclusive and diverse program representation.

CAL FIRE's organizational structure allows for each program to plan, execute, control, and assess their objectives. The committee structure is intended to provide a forum to discuss executive and senior management level issues that span multiple programs/functions to achieve the overall mission of the Department.

CAL FIRE utilizes an issuance system as an internal control framework. This issuance system is a series of handbooks and forms centrally located and available to all employees, providing consistent principles, standards, and guidance by which the Department operates. The issuance system also serves to document approvals, provide appropriate notifications to impacted stakeholders, designate handbook owners for monitoring of handbook content, and outline the Department's policy, procedures, temporary directives, etc. The CAL FIRE Policy and Procedures Committee (P&PC), under DLT, is charged with maintaining, updating, and revising, as needed, the Issuance System Handbook. The P&PC serves as an advisory body to provide guidance to ensure consistent formatting of issuance documents to promote uniformity within the Issuance System.

CAL FIRE employs multiple Departmental strategies for establishing and maintaining a diverse, competent, and inclusive workforce. These efforts include, but are not limited to, optimizing opportunities for outreach, increasing social media engagement, expanding advertising beyond traditional methods, maintaining mailing lists for job and examination announcements, maintaining a recruitment mailbox, hosting various hotlines, attending coordinated events (e.g., job fairs, career workshops, symposiums), taking part in DEI efforts, and contributing to activities in support of a California for ALL.

CAL FIRE's talent acquisition model is best represented in a pie chart that depicts a shared responsibility between employees, management, and various programs. For example, EEO/DEI is responsible for outreach focused on under-represented communities/persons, administering the Department's Upward Mobility Program, and collaborating with the SPB for recruitment of candidates for the Limited Examination and Appointment Process (LEAP) program for persons with disabilities in addition to its other mandatory functions. The

Workforce Planning and Recruitment Unit (WPRU) in HR is responsible for continually analyzing CAL FIRE's current workforce, identifying future needs, and developing and administering a Statewide recruitment program, with the goal of fostering relationships with internal and external stakeholders to recruit, develop, and retain a talented and diverse workforce. The Returning Veterans: Enlisting Their Skills for CAL FIRE Service (R.V.E.T.S.) program is the Department's grassroots effort to assist Veterans, Service Members, and their families with transition and integration into service with the Department. CAL FIRE Regions/Units may participate in career events at the local level or participate in larger coordinated events. The Communications Bureau is responsible for continued outreach through various media platforms and through its Public Information Officers (PIOs) established throughout the State. PSP is responsible for the Department's onboarding program for new employees. Multi-faceted, CAL FIRE's recruitment function works collaboratively with others to bolster the Department's footprint and to explore creative opportunities to enhance its workforce and promote the State of California as the employer of choice.

Talent acquisition also extends to the BOF, which engages in outreach and education programs for the maintenance, development, and recruitment of Registered Professional Foresters (RPFs). The Professional Foresters Examining Committee (PFEC), appointed by the BOF, is entrusted with the responsibility of conducting examinations for individuals seeking registration as Registered Professional Foresters (RPFs). Additionally, the PFEC is tasked with initiating and overseeing investigations in response to complaints against RPFs and providing recommendations for disciplinary actions to the BOF.

Enforcement of accountability is maintained at a variety of levels up through the Director. If unreasonable/excessive pressures or issues arise, these may be escalated to the Directorate level and may also be addressed through various entities (e.g., CNRA, State Legislature, or the Governor's Office). In addition to its other responsibilities, to enhance accountability, the PSP publishes a quarterly report of employee actions on the CAL FIRE intranet. This report provides the classification, description of the offense, and types of actions for employee misconduct.

Information and Communication

Communication is a vital management component that contributes to CAL FIRE's success. As previously provided, there are committee structures for communicating issues, and there is a Departmental issue paper process for moving issues forward within the Department. There are other processes outlined in the Department's Issuance System for information sharing and for organizational improvement and recognition (e.g., merit suggestions, Director's Annual Recognition Program), for reporting alleged improper activities (e.g., filing with the EEO, merit issue complaints, employee internal complaint processes, CWPA filing, filing with external agencies directly), for requesting staffing/funding [e.g., budget change concepts, budget change proposals (BCPs)], and for educating employees on effective communication, channels, and protocols.

CAL FIRE has a dedicated intranet, utilizes social media, electronic media, printed material, virtual platforms, organizational surveys, and conducts face-to-face meetings to execute communication plans in addition to other modes of communication. The CAL FIRE Internet site was revamped to provide a more user-centric method of storing and displaying information.

CAL FIRE's Communication Bureau is tasked with strategies addressing the overall improvement of internal and external communications and, as described previously, utilizes PIOs to provide information to a variety of stakeholders, including the public.

MONITORING

The information included here discusses the entity-wide, continuous process to ensure internal control systems are working as intended. The role of the executive monitoring sponsor includes facilitating and verifying that the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection monitoring practices are implemented and functioning. The responsibilities as the executive monitoring sponsor(s) have been given to: Windy C. Bouldin, Deputy Director, Office of Program Accountability.

The E-Team, chaired on a rotating basis, is responsible for performing monitoring activities associated with the State Leadership Accountability Act (SLAA). E-Team holds monthly meetings to discuss current and potential issues for the Department. These meetings allow executive management to discuss issues and what steps, if any, are needed to mitigate high-risk issues. E-Team members share experiences and further assist each other in addressing statewide challenges, as well as provide recommendations for resolution. In some cases, issues are remanded down to DLT to address or assign to other stakeholder groups. All Departmental committees and working groups perform routine monitoring activities by meeting on a regular basis to address programmatic issues affecting operations. Notwithstanding, Departmental program management throughout the organization performs similar activities as part of their normal course of operations.

Periodic reviews of functions within the Department may also be built into the respective programs' responsibilities to provide formalized feedback on the effectiveness of the internal control system. For example, 1) Serious Accident Review Teams are assigned to investigate incidents and provide management with facts and recommendations to prevent future occurrences, 2) Conservation Camp Management Reviews are conducted by CAL FIRE and representatives from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to assess the Conservation Camps' compliance with applicable mandates (e.g., law, regulations, Departmental policies), 3) Emergency Command Center (ECC) Reviews are established to ensure ECCs are operating in a manner consistent with State and Department laws, rules, and regulations, and 4) Air Attack Base and Helitack Base Reviews are conducted to ensure airbases are operating in a manner consistent with State and Department laws, rules, and regulations (e.g., the Federal Aviation Administration, California Department of Transportation, local airport policies). These types of reviews, along with external agencies and/or stakeholders who perform periodic audits and/or compliance reviews, also assist in monitoring performance and identifying opportunities for improvement. The Department's E-Team contributes to the development of an annual audit plan for the Office of Program Accountability to perform independent risk-based assurance audits and/or consulting engagements of the Department's programs, processes, and systems including, but not limited to, internal controls and to provide objective feedback to management. In 2024, the Office of Program Accountability will formalize an external audit program to assess award recipients' compliance with applicable grant requirements and standards.

To assist in establishing a foundation for monitoring, the Department created the CAL FIRE State Leadership Accountability Act Monitoring Activities document based on the DOF publication. This document provides information on SLAA and monitoring as well as the Department's efforts in monitoring risk. With changes in E-Team membership over the course of the year, this document will be reviewed and updated. The executive monitoring sponsor has a standing item for SLAA activities on the E-Team monthly agenda. Additional ongoing monitoring activities include, but are not limited to, monthly E-Team meetings, bi-weekly Director's Staff meetings, bi-monthly Northern and Southern Region Leadership Team meetings, and Director's Program briefings. The executive monitoring sponsor attends these meetings and communicates with the Department's E-Team on an ongoing basis. CAL FIRE acknowledges that all levels of management must be involved in assessing and strengthening the system of internal control to minimize fraud, errors, abuse, and waste of governmental funds (CAL FIRE 2000 Program Accountability Handbook).

RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The following personnel were involved in the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection risk assessment process: executive management, middle management, front line management, and staff.

The following methods were used to identify risks: brainstorming meetings, employee engagement surveys, ongoing monitoring activities, audit/review results, other/prior risk assessments, questionnaires, and consideration of potential fraud.

The following criteria were used to rank risks: likelihood of occurrence, potential impact to mission/goals/objectives, timing of potential event, potential impact of remediation efforts, and tolerance level for the type of risk.

RISKS AND CONTROLS

Risk: BOF – RPFs

There is a continued risk to the ecology of forested landscapes and the quality of the forest environment via the management and treatment of forest resources and timberlands in California due to the reduced number of RPFs in California, resulting in the lack of forest management experts who are trained, experienced, and skilled in the scientific fields related to forestry. Over the last two years, mitigation strategies such as increased outreach focused on interstate and intrastate institutions of higher education, participation in special events, an enhanced social media presence, and the development of an RPF pathway video have assisted in creating interest; however, the existing number of RPFs remain largely comprised of retirees.

As the number of licenses and associated revenues decline, the budget for the BOF's Office of Professional Foresters Licensing (based largely on license fees) is also negatively impacted, limiting funding for critical outreach efforts, examination administration, and the enforcement of licensing actions that require administrative law court proceedings. Around 2021, the BOF received limited funding to assist with recruitment; however, the cost of administering examinations and the continued need for outreach are continuous expenses not met with a

one-time offset. RPFs play an important role in the sustainable management of forests, including, but not limited to, timber management and harvesting, climate change management, ecological restoration and conservation, and management of protected areas.

Control: Apprentice Professional Forester (APF) Program

The PFEC has requested the development of an Initial Statement of Reasons for an Apprentice Professional Forester program rule package for review at the January 2024 meeting. If the PFEC approves the regulatory language, it will be forwarded to the BOF as a workshop agenda item for the March BOF 2024 meeting and receive public comment prior to the development of a Final Statement of Reasons for possible adoption. The approximate timeline for possible Office of Administrative Law approval is sometime after October 1, 2024.

Control: Restructure of RPF Examination

Part of the APF program proposal is the establishment of a new examination at year-four of the seven years required to qualify for RPF licensing. The completion of the APF program at year-four, followed by successful testing in a newly proposed examination on forestry core competency, will allow successful APF program enrollees the opportunity to take an abbreviated examination on applied knowledge once they are fully qualified for professional licensing at year-seven. This would effectively split the examination into two parts for successful participants of an APF program. If the regulatory language is approved by the PFEC, it will be forwarded to the BOF as a workshop agenda item for the March BOF 2024 meeting to receive public comment prior to the development of a Final Statement of Reasons and adoption. The approximate timeline for possible approval is sometime after October 1, 2024.

Control: BCP and Statutory Change to Fee Schedule

The BOF's of Professional Foresters Registration has proposed revised statutory maximums in several BCP proposals over the last four years. The fee maximums from prior rulemaking are at least 30 years old and becoming obsolete. Notably, the examination application fee has already reached the \$200.00 statutory maximum. The examination fee accounts for at least 10% of all revenue for the forester fund and is rapidly being outpaced by the costs associated with testing, grading, and examination development. Any future BCPs in coordination with the CAL FIRE Budget Office will contain these proposed statutory changes.

Control: Continued Outreach

The BOF is in the third year of an outreach contract with Forestry Educators Incorporated. Encumbered amounts will not be fully utilized due to many western forestry schools, post Covid, preferring informal, remote based outreach over formal, in-person meetings. The BOF currently has several more in-person outreach opportunities in Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia for the remainder of the contract. Future BCP proposals will include

outreach focusing on remote meetings for any out-of-state colleges and in-person meetings for professional conventions and in-state colleges. Also, CAL FIRE recently completed an online RPF outreach video for the BOF that is now posted on YouTube and on both CAL FIRE and BOF's Facebook pages.

Risk: Infrastructure (e.g., aging, non-existent, delays in replacements, public work thresholds)

CAL FIRE's facility inventory is approximately 3,011 State-owned structures, which collectively exceed 4.1 million square feet. Many of the facilities were constructed between 1930 and 1970, with over 80% having been built prior to 1970. These facilities were designed to have a maximum operational life of 50 years. These essential services facilities with a median age of 60 years old require repair, maintenance, or improvement projects. Many of these facilities have also transitioned from seasonal to primary year-round operations. Although CAL FIRE has received funding for deferred maintenance projects, the overall growth in the Department has created an extreme demand for deferred maintenance projects. Since Fiscal Year 2019-20, facility needs have increased exponentially and include various administration requests, Air Attack Base retrofits for C-130s, Conservation Camp conversions, an increased deferred maintenance workload, retrofitting of helitack bases due to the new Firehawk helicopters, and a renewed focus on resource management/reforestation infrastructure. Further, there have been requests to upgrade lookout fire detection, communications technological advancements, immediate retrofitting for facility standby power due to Public Safety Power Shutoff shutdowns, sustainability retrofitting for electrical, water conservation, wastewater reduction and discharge quality, and resource reduction. All these program expansions require facilities and facility modifications, whether self-performed, managed, or overseen by CAL FIRE or the Department of General Services (DGS). Furthermore, based on various Executive Orders, the need to combat climate change, and compliance of zero emissions by 2035, CAL FIRE is required to comply with sustainability practices, retrofit all facilities with heat pumps to replace the use of natural gas and propane, as well as other resource conversions to bring on average sixty-year-old facilities to current day zero net energy.

Control: BCPs and/or Capital Outlay Budget Change Proposals (COBCPs)

When the Department has the need for additional resources and/or funding to change the level of service for activities authorized by the State Legislature, propose new program activities not currently authorized, and/or to request capital outlay appropriation, a BCP and/or COBCP is required. A BCP/COBCP plays a critical part in the annual budget process. In preparation, there are a number of factors that affect whether a BCP/COBCP will be approved for inclusion in the Governor's budget, some of these factors are outside of the Department's sphere of influence. Recognizing this opportunity to address staffing and funding needs, CAL FIRE prepares and submits BCPs/COBCPs annually, as applicable, to address items of high risk.

Control: Collaborate with DGS

CAL FIRE has and will continue to work closely with DGS on all departmental infrastructure

needs. There is a monthly Capital Outlay Program Committee meeting between CAL FIRE and DGS Real Estate Services Division staff where regular check-in and progress is maintained on all projects. Beginning Fiscal Year 2022-23, DGS provided support for CAL FIRE to fill Project Director civil service classifications to ensure maximum performance and flexibility is provided directly by CAL FIRE, with less direct project management oversight from DGS. These positions have proven challenging to fill, as the candidate pool of those with requisite knowledge and experience is limited; however, as the positions are filled, it is expected the backlog of workload will be a primary focus.

Risk: Payroll Processing

Payroll processes are inherently risky, with consequences that impact the Department's greatest asset—its employees. The complexities and volume of CAL FIRE's hiring transactions have increased significantly in recent years. Some of this is due to complicated transactions, additional positions, and separations/replacements behind seasonal hires or due to attrition. Furthermore, CAL FIRE is a decentralized agency, meaning that much of the day-to-day administrative functions are delegated to the Regions and Units. This model allows for better accessibility to field personnel, enhanced communication, and timely decision-making; however, it can also lend itself to inconsistency in application and the lack of expertise.

Control: Policies and Procedures

October 2024, CAL FIRE's HR management are to define the roles and responsibilities of personnel staff, thoroughly documenting such with concise, clear, and understandable terms. Develop policies, detailed procedures, and desk manual guidance to personnel staff statewide to ensure consistent application of processes. This will reduce room for error of the interpretation of broad policy descriptions, providing staff with specific directions with step-by-step instruction.

Control: Tools and Training

By October 2024, CAL FIRE HR will be developing personnel payroll onboarding and training for personnel staff statewide to ensure consistency in training and responsibility. As well as implementing desk manual tools such as guide cards and reference materials including, but not limited to, step-by-step instructions for how to process hiring documents, specifics on pay differentials, and other specialized pay. These tools will be implemented and utilized statewide to ensure consistency in processing requirements.

Additionally, CAL FIRE's HR will develop a review process by July 2025 to regularly monitor by spot checking, processing hires and other pay documents on an ongoing basis, and monitoring for ongoing training needs.

Risk: Issuance System

CAL FIRE utilizes an Issuance System comprised of a series of handbooks and forms for consistent principles, standards, and guidance by which it operates and provides employees with the information necessary to carry out the Department's mission. The Department has made great strides in redesigning its issuance system including, but not limited to, developing

and implementing the CAL FIRE 0100 Issuance Systems Handbook and the establishment of the P&PC. However, policies and procedures remain a risk due to competing workloads at the handbook owner level, and due to insufficient staffing, handbooks are not always current, established, followed, or enforced.

Control: Esper

Around 2021, the P&PC was created and tasked with exploring, identifying, and recommending the implementation of a software solution for replacing the current intranet-based system. CAL FIRE has contracted with Esper, a policy and regulation database cloud software provider, to design and implement a department-specific replacement of its existing handbook system. Esper automates policy workflows and streamlines policymaking. Esper automatically draws relationships between different policies and programs and hosts tools for easier policy promulgation, transparency, and maintenance. Esper will ensure institutional knowledge does not leave with an administration change or retirement and may serve as an onboarding tool for new employees.

CAL FIRE continues to collaborate with Esper in working toward full implementation. A soft launch of the pilot project is anticipated to occur around January 2024.

Risk: Recruitment and Retention

The Department continues to experience recruitment and retention challenges and strives to foster a DEI work environment. Furthermore, without consideration of DEI strategies in recruitment and retention activities, there is a risk of limiting candidate pools to homogenous groups, deterring top talent, and missing out on diverse perspectives that can lead to innovation roadblocks and employee morale issues, including but not limited to inequity and disparities.

Additionally, there is an ongoing risk to operations due to specialized and required critical skillsets for certain Departmental classifications resulting in hard-to-fill positions. This is exacerbated by pay disparities between public and private salaries, remote work locations, outdated minimum qualifications, and the State's hiring processes. CAL FIRE is working on innovative outreach to mitigate some of these impacts, as well as streamlined processes to assist in expediting hiring timeframes.

Control: Racial Equity Plan

A critical part of CAL FIRE's mission, core values, and the Department's strategic planning is to continue to integrate DEI and infuse Governor Newsom's [Executive Order Number N-16-22](#), by fostering DEI—embedding a designed path to expand inclusion and participation of individuals in underserved communities, as well as within the Department's culture, policies, and procedures, while also working to further strengthen, develop, and support meaningful relationships with unrepresented communities and California Tribal Communities. [CAL FIRE's Embedding Equity Action Plan](#) was implemented in January 2023. This roadmap sets out goals including, but not limited to, new and continued partnerships with resource groups and advisory councils, multi-lingual and diverse

community outreach, demographic awareness, and enhanced tribal relations.

Additional focus to reduce risk related to recruitment and retention in addition to promoting DEI is the expansion of an internal/external DEI resource by January 2025 to include tools, training, and overall support, by October 2024, a data system to include innovative methods of tracking demographic needs and amplifying best practices for improved outreach, education, and meaningful engagement of community and diverse populations, and by January 2025, the creation and implementation of employee resource groups that will assist in creating a sense of belonging and allyship as well as improve the attraction and retention of employees.

Control: Outreach (e.g., LinkedIn, vehicle wraps, special events)

CAL FIRE's WPRU will continue to work collaboratively with other departmental programs (e.g., EEO/DEI, R.V.E.T.S., Communications Bureau, and Technology Division) to evaluate statewide vacancies, determine hard-to-recruit positions as well as hard-to-recruit areas of the state, and assess various recruitment issues on a statewide basis. These efforts will be used to increase planning, focus target recruitments, and identify recruitment challenge trends. As part of CAL FIRE's ongoing recruitment efforts, the WPRU has established a contract with LinkedIn to assist in identifying and targeting qualified candidate pools of individuals with an interest in civil service, the CAL FIRE mission, and/or have experience relative to CAL FIRE operations and workload.

Additional outreach efforts include, but are not limited to, the current development of a CAL FIRE-specific recruitment website, which is expected to be implemented by Spring 2024, recruitment vehicle wraps to be utilized by CAL FIRE's Public Education and Recruitment Offices at events throughout the state, new recruitment booth displays with QR code access to events, job advertisements, and the creation of a dedicated recruitment website. WPRU will continue to collaborate with internal programs to increase the Department's social media outreach on all platforms working to target interested candidates with specific information about job vacancies and examination opportunities. Further, WPRU is responsible for having close collaboration with program subject matter experts to identify workload function and the need to effectively promote and recruit for those specific needs utilizing each of the tools available. This control to be implemented by January 2025, and will assist in increased recruitment and retention initiatives and opportunities and mitigate the impact of hiring challenges by offering focused efforts on succession planning.

Risk: Hiring Processes

The hiring process is a crucial part of the Department's growth, and delays in this process can have severe consequences; this is even more apparent when CAL FIRE is experiencing a period of rapid growth necessitating expedited hiring. Delayed hiring processes can have serious consequences, from missed opportunities to a decrease in employee morale and an increase in turnover. Furthermore, these hiring delays can cause reputational harm and work against any innovative recruitment strategies. There are many contributing factors to the timeliness of hiring including, but not limited to, navigation of civil service rules and testing

methodologies, time-consuming processes, and hard-to-fill civil service classification that may require multiple advertisements. Although there may be legitimate reasons for the prolonged timeframes, CAL FIRE recognizes the need to improve recruitment efficiency and streamline hiring processes.

Control: Hiring Workgroup

In July 2023, CAL FIRE established a Hiring Workgroup tasked with providing a coordinated forum to identify and address all hiring matters of importance, more specifically looking at those relating to recruitment, examinations, hiring, training, operations, and the ongoing impacts to hiring and as hot topics elevate with a need for review. The Hiring Workgroup will utilize innovative and creative ideas as well as cutting-edge technology to improve current processes and procedures with the goal of cultivating a high-functioning and efficient system. Further, the Hiring Workgroup was assigned in October 2023, the responsibility of evaluating department-specific civil service classification specifications to identify current-day standards for minimum qualifications and training and to ensure qualified candidates are not eliminated due to outdated requirements. Revised classification specifications are anticipated to be reviewed and submitted for approval to CalHR on a flow basis with a completion date of October 2025

Control: Automated Request for Personnel Action (PO-200)

CAL FIRE has recognized a need to create a streamlined approach to all hiring documentation and processes. An initial development of an electronic version of the PO-200 has been developed. This electronic form will create a user-friendly experience, allowing for ease of navigation in what can be a confusing process with drop-down options for required information and attachments. The form was developed with an understanding of what is required to meet the intent of CAL FIRE's delegation from CalHR for the hiring process, and ultimately will create a mechanism to ensure consistency of required documents across the State, will allow for the efficiency of a cumbersome process, and create timesaving for hiring managers as well as HR staff required to process these documents.

A soft launch of this pilot program will begin in March 2024, and is expected to be fully implemented by January 2025.

Control: Automated Bulk Hiring Process

CAL FIRE has recognized a need to create a streamlined approach to all hiring documentation and processes. CAL FIRE can currently mass-hire many of its department-specific classifications multiple times annually due to fluctuating needs. A review of the current process shows that it is an entirely paper-driven, manual workload, which can be cumbersome and confusing for the candidates as well as hiring staff. The Hiring Workgroup has been tasked with a thorough review of this process, looking for opportunities to create efficiency and ease while still meeting the intent of the hiring delegation with CalHR. The Hiring Workgroup is expected to begin a review of the process immediately, with recommendations for a modernized process for executive-level review

no later than January 2025.

Risk: Technology

The Department's aging technology infrastructure continues to be at risk due to rapid changes in the evolving business environment, the need to automate manual processes, and the ongoing hazard to information security, resulting in an increased threat profile to all core functions. CAL FIRE's Information Technology Services (ITS) is understaffed and underfunded to meet the Department's current needs. Despite the volume of data ingested and the mission-critical need for accurate and timely reporting, CAL FIRE lacks data science and data analytic capabilities to meet the Department's operational needs. Without staff expertise to manage and execute the required analytical tasks or the funding to procure modernized information and data management systems, the Department's technology posture will continue to be high risk.

Control: Staff Expertise and Funding

When the Department has the need for additional resources and/or funding to change the level of service for activities authorized by the State Legislature and/or propose new program activities not currently authorized a BCP is required. A BCP plays a critical part in the annual budget process. In preparation there are a number of factors that affect whether a BCP will be approved for inclusion in the Governor's budget, some of these factors are outside of the Department's sphere of influence. Recognizing this opportunity to address staffing and funding needs, CAL FIRE prepares and submits BCPs annually, as applicable, to address items of high risk.

Control: Digital Infrastructure

ITS will work collaboratively with stakeholders to evaluate core digital infrastructure across the Department, including, but not limited to, telecommunications, connectivity, broadband, and consolidation of data. This helps with efficient resource management to ensure that the Department's budget is used effectively and that the infrastructure is sustainable in the long run. By involving stakeholders, the Technology Division at all levels leverages the expertise, knowledge, and unique perspectives, which allows for enhanced decision-making in the form of better identification of risks and opportunities and improved problem-solving. Collaboration between ITS staff increases transparency and improves working relationships by creating a shared understanding of the Department's digital goals and priorities, leading to better alignment with the mission and vision. In this process, ITS staff identifies gaps and vulnerabilities that may not have been evident otherwise and escalates them to ITS management to validate the situation's severity further. With the business partner, the Technology Division will develop strategies to address gaps and reduce technical debt while improving overall system resilience and performance as an ongoing part of the information technology strategy and overall Department mission.

Control: Innovation and Early Adopter Community

Explore the potential in creating an innovation and early adopter community to assist with the testing and phased rollout of new technologies, as well as developing and delivering training and awareness to enable employees across the Department to use the latest technology to solve problems and/or enhance operations. The valuable feedback received from early adopters will be used to help with performance, usability, and potential issues. This method allows innovation by increasing the chance of finding new ways to use the technology not originally anticipated by developers in the existing Use Cases. The Department will reduce risk by having early adopters test on a small scale, allowing the Technology Division to identify and resolve any issues before widespread implementation. Encouraging a community of early adopters helps to foster a culture of innovation within the Department and encourages individuals to think creatively and contribute to the ongoing improvement of technology systems and processes. This process is to be used as part of the overall process used by the teams when they conduct research on the development of new technologies considered for the enterprise.

Control: Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Develop and implement AI tools and guidance for employees with appropriate access to help them perform their job functions more effectively and efficiently. AI can analyze large amounts of historical data to identify trends, themes, and anomalies within a given solution or system. Using this information helps to reduce risk by allowing the prioritization of resources, planning of preventive measures, and responding to situations more effectively. Based on the available data, AI can provide real-time guidance to CAL FIRE employees in making informed decisions. The automation associated with AI can help to automate repetitive tasks and reduce or even eliminate errors. AI tools can start now by facilitating better communication and collaboration among team members by streamlining information sharing and providing detailed information based on the context and data set it is allowed to review. As a maintenance and operational tool, AI-powered sensors can be used to help track the condition of existing equipment, whether legacy or not, typically monitored by an employee, allowing for predictive maintenance and reducing the risk of equipment failures or downtime.

Risk: Grant Administration

Based on the significant amount of funding provided to the Department since Fiscal Year 2020-21 and the compressed timeframes to solicit and award grants to ensure the best chance of success in meeting the California Wildfire and Forestry Resilience Task Force published goal of treating one million acres annually by 2025, there are inherent risks involved in grant administration.

Control: Consultation Services

The Department, via the Grants Management Unit (GMU), will explore the use of an outside consultant to assist with the review of CAL FIRE policies and procedures, grant guidelines, and field review processes and documentation to advise on areas of

previously unidentified risk and recommendations on how to minimize those risks. GMU anticipates making a decision on whether or not there is a need for an outside consultant by June 30, 2024.

Control: Policies and Procedures

In collaboration with the Regions, Resource Management program, and OSFM, internal policies and procedures will be updated to ensure they address areas of concern identified in past internal and external grant-related audits. The policies and procedures will reflect the standard business practices for the approval and administration of all grants. This will assist in reducing risk to the Department by clearly identifying roles and responsibilities and providing clear expectations to all Department staff for grant administration.

Control: Grant Management via the Grants Portal

The Grants Portal is a web-based software designed for internal and external use. The Grants Portal facilitates the creation and posting of new grant solicitations and the receipt, review, and evaluation of submitted applications. The software also helps manage new and existing grants through pre-award and post-award processes. The GMU, Regions, Resource Management, and OSFM staff across the state can access real-time grant information and financial data from one central location, which helps improve transparency and visibility into how departmental grant funding is being administered. Although the Grants Portal has already been implemented, optimizing its functionality and increasing staff expertise remain ongoing.

Control: External Audit Program

In order to promote transparency, accountability, and responsible financial management of grant funds, CAL FIRE's Office of Program Accountability is developing an external audit program to assess award recipient's compliance with applicable grant requirements and standards. Prior to full implementation of the external audit program, audit staff will collaborate with stakeholders to understand the statutory requirements for awarding funds, the grant selection process, and the grant management system and cost allocation software used by the Department. Currently, work is in progress with the anticipated implementation of the external audit program for Fiscal Year 2024-25.

Control: RPF and Trained Professional Inspections

To ensure grants are administered and implemented consistent with developed grant agreements, the Department employees trained professional staff. These trained professionals specifically review grant invoices as submitted by grantees and compare those invoices to actual work completed on the ground. This provides the Department the ability to compare invoices claiming work completion to actual project ground activities. This invoice review process is conducted at several different levels within the Department (i.e., Units, Regions and Sacramento Headquarters Programs). Ultimately, this provides the Department the ability to ensure invoices are accurate and complete prior

to financial reimbursement.

Risk: Operations – Hand Crews

There is an ongoing risk that the Department will have insufficient hand crews due to the decline of CDCR Crews and the lack of funding, resulting in an impact on the Department's ability to mitigate all-hazard incidents. These crews respond to all types of emergencies, including wildfires, floods, weather events, search and rescue operations, and earthquakes. And, when not responding to emergencies, they are engaged in conservation, community service work projects, and fuel reduction-based projects. CAL FIRE continues to explore the possibility of changes to the firefighter classifications as well as the current model of seasonal firefighters compared to permanent firefighters to allow more flexibility in meeting the ever-changing needs of the Department.

Since June 2023, the Hand Crew Program, in partnership with CAL FIRE's HR, has formed a workgroup comprised of subject matter experts from Sacramento Headquarters Programs, Regions, and Units to collaborate on the current structure of the firefighter Hand Crew model, the needs and goals of the Department statewide, and to review existing civil service classifications within CAL FIRE. The final report will include the most appropriate route for the continuation and success of the program and, through additional analysis, if a new classification specific to the Hand Crew program is better suited.

Control: Classification Study

The Classification Work Group led by the Hand Crew Program will continue to meet and discuss the needs of the Hand Crew model with a focus on statewide needs for fire suppression and fuel reduction work. As the once-traditional fire season has become the fire year, the effectiveness of a nine-month seasonal staffing model in a 12-month period has limitations that do not enhance the mission or goals of the Department. Beginning in early 2024, the findings will be placed into a draft report, allowing the original guidelines set forth when the study was approved for executive management to review and respond to. The final report will deliver the changes required within the Hand Crew Program to be successful in meeting the goals identified for future years; the current budget limitations will be taken into account in the final report, scalable, depending on the level of support.

Risk: Operations – Designated Campus Fire Marshal (DCFM) Program

OSFM is responsible for the oversight of the DCFM program at the University of California campuses. The DCFM program is a delegation of specified fire and life safety review and inspection functions to qualified staff of the institutions with strict adherence to applicable mandates and contractual obligations. DCFM program participants have undergone turnover since initial delegation, and although the OSFM has been working to develop an oversight and review component, limited staffing is a barrier to providing additional training to DCFMs and directly monitoring and inspecting DCFM activities, resulting in potential fire and life safety risks. Despite limited staffing, the OSFM continues to monitor the effectiveness and appropriateness of the existing programs and meets with stakeholders to discuss identified

deficiencies and corrective actions; however, without additional staffing, there remains a critical risk.

Staffing has been granted through the BCP process, and hiring is in process. In the meantime, OSFM has been working diligently with the University of California Office of the President to update the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The current draft MOU will provide more specific language regarding policies and procedures to follow through on the plan review and inspection processes. Metrics to evaluate the objectives and key results are being created for continued evaluation of the program.

Control: Program Implementation

By the end of June 2024, the new MOU will be in place and staff will be hired to implement the Objectives and Key Results that are currently under development and this risk will be considered mitigated.

Risk: Tribal Affairs

The absence of a dedicated program and adequate resources poses formidable challenges to CAL FIRE's earnest commitment to fortify and perpetuate robust relations with California Native American tribal governments. CAL FIRE not only acknowledges but actively embraces the imperative to establish and facilitate effective consultation and communication channels between the Department and California Native American tribal governments. This proactive approach is geared towards addressing pertinent issues impacting California tribal communities and fostering the development of partnerships and consensus.

However, the current shortfall in dedicated resources acts as a critical impediment, significantly hampering CAL FIRE's ability to fully integrate Tribal engagement interests into its decision-making processes concerning natural, historic, and cultural resources. The true optimization of CAL FIRE's commitment necessitates a strategic allocation of resources to ensure the seamless incorporation of Tribal perspectives and concerns, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of the Department's engagement with California Native American tribal governments.

Control: Deputy Director, Tribal Affairs

The Department, in partnership with the Governor's Office, is working on hiring a Deputy Director, Tribal Affairs who will serve as a member of CAL FIRE's E-Team, and will lead, develop, and support a statewide Tribal Affairs Program dedicated to the cultivation and implementation of effective and inclusive relationships. The Deputy Director, Tribal Affairs will serve as a subject matter expert in providing ongoing Tribal education and awareness, represent the Department by leading Tribal engagement initiatives, actively participating in respectfully seeking, discussing, and considering the views of California Indian Tribes and Tribal communities, and ensuring CAL FIRE programs and initiatives integrate Tribal needs and identifying underlying obstacles. The recruitment and selection process is in progress, and an appointment is anticipated by February 2024.

Control: Embedding Equity Action Plan

A critical part of CAL FIRE's mission, core values, and the Department's strategic planning is to continue to integrate DEI and infuse Governor Newsom's [Executive Order Number N-16-22](#), by fostering DEI—embedding a designed path to expand inclusion and participation of individuals in underserved communities, as well as within the Department's culture, policies, and procedures, while also working to further strengthen, develop, and support meaningful relationships with unrepresented communities and California Tribal Communities. CAL FIRE's [Embedding Equity Action Plan](#) was implemented in January 2023. This roadmap sets out DEI goals, including enhancing strategies for tribal inclusion, beginning with the creation and filling of the Deputy Director, Tribal Affairs, and continued collaborations on policy and procedure reform as well as ethnic and multi-language outreach.

Risk: Fireworks Collection and Disposal

The OSFM is mandated by the State Fireworks Law ([Health & Safety Codes §§ 12500-12728](#)) to collect and dispose of seized illegal/dangerous fireworks throughout the State. The OSFM collects illegal/dangerous fireworks from the authorities who seized them (i.e., fire agencies, police departments, sheriff departments). Once collected, the OSFM works with the contractor(s) to dispose of them. The OSFM does not have adequate funding or staffing to collect, store, and dispose of seized illegal/dangerous fireworks. When the OSFM reaches storage capacity, it cannot collect additional seized illegal/dangerous fireworks from local enforcement agencies. This will cause the local enforcement agencies to stockpile their seized fireworks. The lack of OSFM collecting seized illegal/dangerous fireworks will also cause a lower enforcement rate of illegal/dangerous fireworks when the local enforcement agencies cannot safely store them. There is also a fire and life safety hazard with the stockpiling of illegal/dangerous fireworks, which are explosives, throughout the State. To alleviate the risk to the Department, all controls are needed (i.e., funding for disposal and staffing as well as additional storage sites).

Control: Obtaining Additional Funding for New Disposal Contract

The cost for illegal/dangerous fireworks disposal has recently doubled, which will decrease the amount of fireworks that the OSFM can dispose of. The OSFM disposes approximately 260,000 pounds of illegal/dangerous fireworks annually. The current funding would only dispose of about half the yearly average seized fireworks. The OSFM needs additional funding for the disposal of illegal/dangerous fireworks. Furthermore, additional staffing is needed to enforce the illegal fireworks laws, educate the local jurisdictions on the safe handling of explosives, and for pre-disposal operations (processing, packing, and shipping) of seized fireworks and the disposal of illegal/homemade explosives.

When the Department needs additional resources and/or funding to change the level of service for activities authorized by the State Legislature, a BCP is required. A BCP plays a critical part in the annual budget process. In preparation, there are several factors that affect whether a BCP will be approved for inclusion in the Governor's budget, some of these factors being outside of the Department's sphere of influence. Recognizing this

opportunity to address staffing and funding needs, CAL FIRE prepares and submits BCPs annually, as applicable, to address items of high risk.

Control: Obtaining Additional Storage Sites

The OSFM currently uses two sites for firework storage. After the OSFM collects seized fireworks from local enforcement agencies, the OSFM transports them to an OSFM storage sites (Yolo County and Kern County). The Kern County storage site is not ideal due to the travel distance from where the fireworks are being collected in San Diego, Orange, Los Angeles, and Riverside counties. The location requires additional staff hours for transportation and operations because it is remote from most collection areas. Additionally, the Yolo and Kern County storage sites are outside and unsuitable for year-round operations (sorting and prepping fireworks for disposal). The current sites do not meet our operational needs. The additional storage sites will allow greater storage capacity for seized fireworks and would streamline the collection of seized fireworks from local enforcement agencies. The storage at the state level provides a safer and more secure location meeting all current regulatory requirements than at the local agencies, which is commonly at their office sites.

CONCLUSION

The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection strives to reduce the risks inherent in our work and accepts the responsibility to continuously improve by addressing newly recognized risks and revising risk mitigation strategies as appropriate. I certify our internal control and monitoring systems are adequate to identify and address current and potential risks facing the organization.

Joe Tyler, Director

CC: California Legislature [Senate, Assembly]
California State Auditor
California State Library
California State Controller
Director of California Department of Finance
Secretary of California Government Operations Agency