

December 15, 2021

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, 2021.

Should you have any questions please contact  
Windy C. Bouldin, Deputy Director, Office of Program Accountability, at (916) 902-5086,  
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## **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 9,790 permanent and seasonal employees, along with 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 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 Department employees

- Retain the Department workforce through purposeful engagement

CAL FIRE employees are encouraged to become familiar with the Department's strategic planning efforts, and in early 2021 a confidential, voluntary strategic planning questionnaire was distributed to all employees Statewide to gain insight into how the Department's activities were aligning with its strategic goals. Although only around two years into the current strategic plan, the Department is exploring alternatives for the next iteration.

Workforce planning allows the Department to address its current workforce challenges and prepare for any future workforce needs. In July 2019, the CAL FIRE 2019-2021 Workforce Plan was released and is published on CAL FIRE's intranet accessible to all employees. Succession planning is the process of identifying and developing staff to meet the needs of the Department now and in the future. As such, the CAL FIRE 2019-2021 Succession Plan was released and is also posted on the CAL FIRE intranet. Currently, the Department is engaged in efforts to update both planning documents.

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, CAL FIRE's Resource Management program's mission 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 (BSO).

CAL FIRE's Technology program 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, and research and development.

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) 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.

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 a 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, 12 fire centers, 13 air attack and 10 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 further 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 BSO additionally requires Departmental certified purchasers to complete the Office of the Attorney General's ethics training, and

classes administered through CAL FIRE's Training Center or through the State of California Training Center 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 a confidential internal employee complaint (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 Executive Team (E-Team). E-Team is comprised of the Director, Chief Deputy Director, State Fire Marshal, Deputy Directors, Region Chiefs, Assistant State Fire Marshal, and Chief Legal Counsel. 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.

A secondary committee, the 3-Star Committee (3-Star), is comprised of E-Team minus the Director, Chief Deputy Director, and State Fire Marshal. 3-Star is responsible for making high-level strategic decisions on cross-program issues for the Department. If E-Team is "...where we leave our programs at the door," then 3-Star represents its programs by collaborating and resolving issues at the highest level within the Department. 3-Star is responsible for providing momentum, structure, and feedback by championing the execution of high-level Departmental issues. In addition, it provides clarity and alignment on organizational issues at the highest level and instills trust in the Department's committees and programs to carry out their organizational duties.

The 2-Star Committee (2-Star) is comprised of the Assistant Deputy Directors, Assistant Regions Chiefs, and other members of senior management. 2-Star is a collaborative forum to make decisions,

advance ideas, and provide support for CAL FIRE's innovative leadership in public safety and resource protection.

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 2-Star, 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), and taking part in diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts like participating on the California Strategic Growth Council's Capital Collaborative on Race and Equity (CCORE) cohort 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 is responsible for recruitment related to 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 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 a variety of 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

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maintenance, development, and recruitment of Registered Professional Foresters (RPFs). The Professional Foresters Examining Committee serves at the pleasure of the BOF and is charged with the examination of individuals for registration as RPFs, initiation, and monitoring of investigations into complaints made against RPFs, and the recommendation of disciplinary action 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. The CAL FIRE Internet site is also being 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.

3-Star, chaired on a rotating basis, is responsible for performing monitoring activities associated with the State Leadership Accountability Act (SLAA). 3-Star 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. 3-Star 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 2-Star 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 perform 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.

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 3-Star membership, over the course of the new year, this document will be reviewed and updated. The executive monitoring sponsor has a standing item for SLAA activities on the 3-Star 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 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, 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 – Shortage in RPFs**

There is a 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 a declining number of RPFs resulting in the lack of forest management experts who are trained, experienced, and skilled in the scientific fields relating to forestry.

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 (e.g., recruitment materials, event costs) and the enforcement of licensing actions that require administrative law court proceedings. 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: BOF – RPF Recruitment and Outreach**

When the Department, including the BOF, has the need for additional resources and/or funding to change the level of service for activities authorized by the State Legislature or to propose new program activities not currently authorized, a BCP is required. A BCP plays a critical part in the annual budget process and 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 out of the Department's sphere of influence. Recognizing this opportunity to address staffing and funding needs, CAL FIRE prepares and submits BCPs annually to address items of high risk.

### **Risk: Core Capabilities – Emergency Response**

There is a 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 to 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 are engaged in conservation and community service work projects.

Furthermore, the Department is experiencing a risk in recruiting and retaining Incident Command System qualified staff needed to expand Incident Management Teams (IMTs) due to the lack of incentives (e.g., increased compensation, work-life balance) resulting in unfulfilled IMTs. IMTs are used to direct large-scale emergency incidents.

#### **Control: Staffing and Funding – Emergency Response**

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 or to propose new program activities not currently authorized, a BCP is required. A BCP plays a critical part in the annual budget process and 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 out of the Department's sphere of influence. Recognizing this opportunity to address staffing and funding needs, CAL FIRE prepares

and submits BCPs annually to address items of high risk.

### **Control: Classification Proposal – Hand Crews**

The Department has been actively working with the Governor’s Office, DOF, and CalHR to determine alternative non-testing civil service classifications for entry-level work to promote a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive workforce utilizing a training curriculum model requiring less hours. This proposal also opens bridges and avenues for military and California Conservation Corps hand crew members to qualify more easily for employment in CAL FIRE.

CAL FIRE also continues to explore the possibility of changes to the firefighter classifications to allow more flexibility to meet the ever-changing needs of the Department. However, the lack of dedicated staffing to research and analyze the Department’s existing classification plan and to develop new classification proposals will continue to hamper the Department’s ability to sufficiently address this issue.

### **Control: IMT Incentives**

The Department is actively working with CalHR to consider Pay Differentials that would incentivize participation in IMTs including workweek group conversions. These Pay Differentials would be funded through the Department’s Emergency Fund when assigned to a wildland fire incident and would have a lesser affect on the Department’s base budget.

### **Risk: Control Environment**

As previously provided, 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. The P&PC is charged with maintaining, updating, and revising the handbook as needed, serving as an advisory body, and administering training to handbook owners. The P&PC is engaged in the process of exploring, identifying, and recommending the implementation of a software solution for replacing the current intranet-based system. However, policies and procedures remain a risk as competing workload at the handbook owner level, due to insufficient staffing, results in handbooks not always being current, established, followed, or enforced.

There is an ongoing risk as the Department continues to experience challenges related to the implementation of the Financial Information System for California (FI\$Cal) due to staffing limitations, training, and the lack of supplemental tools specific to Departmental needs, resulting in operational inefficiencies. Utilizing Microsoft Power BI, a business data analytic tool, CAL FIRE is extracting information from FI\$Cal to create enhanced dashboard views and additional reporting tools; however, this progress is limited due to lack of staffing, technical knowledge needed, and system limitations. These barriers result in unavailable data or data structured in a way that is not useful for management decision-making further promulgating operational inefficiencies.

### **Control: Staffing and Funding – Control Environment**

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 or to propose new program activities not currently authorized, a BCP is required. A BCP plays a critical part of the annual budget process and 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 out of the Department's sphere of influence. Recognizing this opportunity to address staffing and funding needs, CAL FIRE prepares and submits BCPs annually to address items of high risk.

### **Control: Enhanced Training and Resources – FI\$Cal**

CAL FIRE continues to consult with external entities, as needed, to identify resolution to FI\$Cal-related issues impacting proficiencies and processing times. Currently, the Department is in the process of enhancing its training materials and has created an ad hoc group to develop a user guide for staff with ancillary FI\$Cal duties. The lack of dedicated staffing to provide consistent and frequent training, and maintain policy and procedures as well as training materials does not address the systemic issue related to the overall lack of sufficient Departmental allocations and staffing levels of those charged with FI\$Cal responsibilities Statewide.

### **Risk: Technology**

The Department's aging technology infrastructure is 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 current needs of the Department. 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 operational needs of the Department. Without staff expertise to manage and execute the analytic tasks required, or the funding to procure modernized information systems and data management systems, the Department's technology posture will continue to be high risk. Departmental leaders are impacted by these limitations as they may be unable to secure timely and accurate data needed to make informed decisions. Additionally, these limitations result in missed opportunities in information sharing to partners and a lack of transparency to the public.

Furthermore, the Department's current telecommunication platforms are outdated and have been managed through reliance on ancillary duties of non-ITS staff. Additionally, the Department relies on manual inventory control techniques and monitoring of human capital. The risk in using manual systems for these purposes include, but are not limited to, inconsistencies and inefficiencies due to human error, inaccurate and/or untimely data acquisition and storage, access controls and expense, limitations in interoperability with other systems, and the potential for fraudulent activities.

### **Control: Staffing and Funding – Technology**

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 or to propose new program activities not currently authorized, a BCP is required. A BCP plays a critical part in the annual budget process and 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 out of the Department's sphere of influence. Recognizing this opportunity to address staffing and funding needs, CAL FIRE prepares and submits BCPs annually to address items of high risk

### **Risk: Designated Campus Fire Marshal (DCFM)**

The OSFM is responsible for the oversight of the DCFM program at the University of California and California State University 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 in 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.

### **Control: Staffing and Funding – DCFM**

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 or to propose new program activities not currently authorized, a BCP is required. A BCP plays a critical part in the annual budget process and 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 out of the Department's sphere of influence. Recognizing this opportunity to address staffing and funding needs, CAL FIRE prepares and submits BCPs annually to address items of high risk.

### **Risk: Employee Health, Safety, and Wellness**

Over the past several years, California has experienced multiple consecutive years of catastrophic wildfires brought on by years of drought and climate change. Extreme fire conditions and increased fire activity along with an increase in fire prevention measures to protect the life, property, and resources of California have impacted the Department's employees. The results of the larger, more damaging fires, and the amplified length of the fire season have increased the workload of firefighting and safety personnel as well as administrative support staff.

Despite limited Departmental budget augmentations, there remains a risk to employee health, safety, and wellness as the staffing levels are insufficient. The continued need for staff stems from the ongoing necessity for long work shifts due to increased emergency activity, the inability to provide relief from existing and new workload that outpaces staff, experienced and qualified employees leaving the Department due to employee burnout, morale issues, and the inability to support work-life balance.

Furthermore, staffing and funding for staff who are responsible for training CAL FIRE's workforce are limited. The longer and more active fire season requires that more staff be hired and trained as expeditiously as possible. CAL FIRE's effectiveness in mitigating emergency incidents of all sizes and types is the comprehensive and complementary nature of the Department, which benefits from a depth of knowledge and proficiencies in varied disciplines united by common training, terminology,

communication, and organization. This workload is further exacerbated by capacity limitations. The inability to address training deficiencies, in addition to standards, may result in an increased likelihood of injury, mental health, and physical fatigue, the potential for greater workers' compensation costs, and compliance issues with mandated training

### **Control: Administrative and Operational Support**

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 or to propose new program activities not currently authorized, a BCP is required. A BCP plays a critical part in the annual budget process and 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 out of the Department's sphere of influence. Recognizing this opportunity to address staffing and funding needs, CAL FIRE prepares and submits BCPs annually to address items of high risk.

### **Risk: Talent Acquisition**

The Department continues to experience recruitment and retention challenges and strives to foster a diverse, equitable, and inclusive work environment. As previously discussed, efforts to assist in mitigating this risk include, but are not limited to, CAL FIRE's participation in CCOPE, participation in various Governor initiated sub-committees related to a California for ALL, the development and implementation of both a Departmental workforce plan and a succession plan, and various recruitment tools. However, without addressing the systemic issue of lack of staffing/resources and available training, CAL FIRE may not meet its goal of building an engaged, motivated, and innovative workforce.

Additionally, there is a risk to ongoing 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. Although an avenue to address the inability to recruit/retain viable candidates due to these barriers exists through the State's classification proposal process, the Department is unable to redirect staff to this large-scale, lengthy endeavor due to competing workload demands.

### **Control: Staffing**

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 or to propose new program activities not currently authorized, a BCP is required. A BCP plays a critical part in the annual budget process and 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 out of the Department's sphere of influence. Recognizing this opportunity to address staffing and funding needs, CAL FIRE prepares and submits BCPs annually to address items of high risk.

### **Control: CAL FIRE Career Zone**

The Department continues its work on creating and enhancing recruitment and retention tools. The CAL FIRE Career Zone will be located on the CAL FIRE intranet, accessible to all employees. This site will be focused on hosting available tools and is aimed at assisting and developing

employees to stay and promote from within.

### **Risk: Pandemic-Related**

Inherent emergency response capabilities assisted CAL FIRE during the onset of the pandemic, while staff were also serving and safeguarding the people and protecting the property and resources of California in one of the worst fire seasons on record. However, it did not come without peril, as emergency responders were at increased risk of exposure while prioritizing the mission of CAL FIRE. Already strained resources, not limited to staff, were redirected to pandemic-related activities. Furthermore, pandemic conditions challenged Departmental efforts to comply with rapidly changing, externally imposed requirements. Adding to this demand, CAL FIRE was identified by CalHR as a pilot Department to implement a weekly testing program. Redirection of staff hours to administer, enforce, and participate in ongoing testing, as well as evolving mandates and vaccination uncertainties impact operational abilities.

### **Control: Pandemic-Related Staffing**

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 or to propose new program activities not currently authorized, a BCP is required. A BCP plays a critical part in the annual budget process and 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 out of the Department's sphere of influence. Recognizing this opportunity to address staffing and funding needs, CAL FIRE prepares and submits BCPs annually to address items of high risk.

## **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.

**Thomas W. Porter, Director**

CC: California Legislature [Senate (2), Assembly (1)]  
California State Auditor  
California State Library  
California State Controller  
Director of California Department of Finance  
Secretary of California Government Operations Agency