



TODD SPITZER

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Spitzer Helps Secure Victory for Firefighting Efforts in Orange County

Increased Helicopter Crew to Begin on Sunday

(IRVINE, CA) – The Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) will have a new weapon to help keep the county safe as this year is expected to be one of the worst fire seasons on record, Supervisor Todd Spitzer said Friday.

The OCFA Board of Directors voted Thursday night to appropriate \$2.1 million to hire full-time staff which will provide for an additional helicopter in the air to fight fires. Spitzer who sits on the Board, motioned to approve this expenditure, which was unanimously passed. He has advocated for ways to increase OCFA's resources given the extremely dry weather conditions of the past several years as his district has borne the brunt of recent wildfires.

“Even though other local jurisdictions offer help in fighting fires, it’s essential that we have our own strong fleet of helicopters that can take off at a moment’s notice,” Spitzer said. “One additional helicopter in the air will make a huge difference in knocking down out-of-control blazes. It can also fly at night when winds die down, which will make the biggest dent.”

In 2008, Orange County’s worst fire on record – the [Freeway Complex fire](#) – burned 30,305 acres between Corona and Anaheim, torching Yorba Linda and Brea as it traveled. It destroyed 314 homes. A subsequent report revealed that helicopters belonging to other local agencies were grounded during the fire and did not assist.

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And last year, Canyon Fire 1 and 2 burned a total of 12,000 acres with 80 structures damaged or destroyed.

“Last year it seemed like half of California was on fire and it lasted for weeks,” Spitzer said. “We need a better insurance policy and this is a great start.”

The new expenditure will fund two fire pilots, a fire captain, two helicopter mechanics and training for the positions. A temporary pilot will staff the helicopter beginning Monday until the other positions are filled.

In addition, OCFA will provide a fuel tanks for Orange County Sheriff’s Dept. helicopters that assist in fighting fires. The tanks will be located at the scene to ensure quick refills.

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