COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

FIRE DEPARTMENT

1320 NORTH EASTERN AVENUE
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90063-3294
(323) 881-2401

P. MICHAEL FREEMAN
FIRE CHIEF
FORESTER & FIRE WARDEN

February 27, 2007

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Supervisors:

HEARING ON RECOMMENDED FEE INCREASE FOR THE JUNIOR LIFEGUARD PROGRAM (ALL DISTRICTS) (3 VOTES)

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE BOARD, ACTING AS THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CONSOLIDATED FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT, AFTER THE PUBLIC HEARING:

1. Approve a $34 increase to the Junior Lifeguard Program fee from $386 to $420.

2. Find that the purpose of this increase is to meet increased operational expenses of the Junior Lifeguard Program.

PURPOSE OF RECOMMENDED ACTION:

In June 1978, your Board directed that the Junior Lifeguard Program be self-sustaining through fees paid by participants. Since then, the program fee has been increased several times to ensure compliance with this policy. Therefore, we are recommending a fee increase to fully recover direct program costs for uniforms, equipment, and instructor salary increases.

JUSTIFICATION:

The proposed Junior Lifeguard Program fee reflects a complete accounting of direct employee costs (salary and employee benefits), uniform, and equipment costs. The fee reflects increased direct costs for the program exclusive of overhead. Overhead has traditionally been absorbed by the District and the General Fund on a pro-rata basis, and we are recommending the continuation of this practice, which has been approved by your Board in the past. The fee methodology has been reviewed and approved by the Auditor-Controller.

Given the benefits of teaching water safety skills to our youth, this program's proposed fee balances the need for cost recovery with the desire to maximize participation. There were a total of 2,323 paid participants in the summer of 2006, and we are estimating that approximately 2,350 participants will be attracted to the five-week program in the summer of 2007. The total program costs will be approximately $963,000.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals:

Approval of the recommended action is consistent with the County's Strategic Goal of Service Excellence.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING:

None. Direct program costs are fully offset by fees paid by the participants.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS:

The Junior Lifeguard Program has been conducted by the County of Los Angeles for 46 years. The program teaches beach safety and physical fitness to boys and girls from nine to 17 years of age for five weeks during the summer. Each participant in the program receives a swimsuit or trunks, a t-shirt with the Junior Lifeguard logo, and a one-year membership to the United States Lifesaving Association, which includes three issues of "American Lifeguard" magazine.

One full-time ocean lifeguard specialist, one seasonal ocean lifeguard specialist, four seasonal supervisors, two student workers, and 65 ocean lifeguard instructors comprise the program's staff. This staff provides instruction to junior lifeguards in ocean lifesaving techniques, cardiopulmonary resuscitation and first aid skills, environmental concerns, ocean safety, and ocean and beach sports. In addition to the improved personal ocean proficiency and health provided to every junior lifeguard, the optional Cadet Program provides additional lifeguard skills training and experience for veteran junior lifeguards planning to become professional lifeguards or pursue other career opportunities related to the marine environment.

The only requirement for participation in the Junior Lifeguard Program is the ability to swim. Concerted efforts are made to attract youth from minority groups and from areas outside the coastal communities. Financial aid funded by program fees, in addition to community donations, will continue to ensure qualified youth can participate in the program regardless of their ability to pay.

The proposed fee increase is exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it does not constitute a "project" subject to the act (Guidelines, Section 15378, Subd. (b) (4)).

This request for approval of the increased fee will be made after all public notification and hearing requirements are complied with, as specified in Section 6062a and Section 66018 of the Government Code.

STATUS OF PROGRAM SERVICES:

The Junior Lifeguard Program's total enrollment has leveled off at about 2,350 participants over the past four years. The program's goals are to maintain safety and quality as well as to continue to broaden the diversity of its participants. The program's outreach efforts have traveled well beyond the coastal communities, providing education on ocean safety and information regarding the Junior Lifeguard Program throughout Los Angeles County.

The Junior Lifeguard Outreach Program continues to focus on three areas:

1. The inclusion of program sites with beaches more accessible to non-beach community residents. Cabrillo, Santa Monica, El Segundo, and Venice are beaches with freeway access, which reduces transportation time.

2. The dissemination of Junior Lifeguard Program information through the District's Lifeguard Division Public Education Program, District Community Services Representatives, and through the District's website.

3. The cooperative effort with the Department of Beaches and Harbors Water, Awareness, Training, Education, and Recreation (W.A.T.E.R.) Program and the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation.

PUBLIC EDUCATION:

The Los Angeles County Lifeguard Public Education Team visits 30 to 40 schools throughout the County of Los Angeles each year, providing ocean safety education and information to more than 6,000 students. In addition, the Public Education Program continues to participate in career days and safety events, Safety Service Fairs, the Los Angeles County Fair, the Revlon Run-Walk and other expositions in conjunction with various County entities. All of these events enable the District to disseminate safety information to over 100,000 children and adults each year.

FEE INCREASE FACTORS:

There are four main points concerning the Junior Lifeguard Program fee increase.

1. The Junior Lifeguard Program fee has remained the same since 2005 despite program cost increases. Employee benefits have increased by 6 percent during the past two fiscal years and employee salaries are set to rise 15.5 percent by Fiscal Year 2007-08; therefore the program fee must be raised in order to fully recover direct program costs and continue to be self-sustaining as mandated.

2. In order to replace outdated and worn equipment, continue to provide a high quality uniform and various program supplies, and purchase enough new equipment to safely accommodate the large number of program participants, $110,000 is requested for the program services and supplies budget.

3. In order to effectively manage the Junior Lifeguard Program averaging 2,350 children, provide adequate supervision of 65 instructors, and ensure participant safety, the current budgeted and dedicated Junior Lifeguard Program positions must be maintained.

4. Parents of participants continue to request that the program be maintained at its current length as often as the local school schedules permit. Without a fee increase to $420, program days may have to be cut in order to avoid a program cost overrun. Many parents have indicated a preference of a fee increase over a loss of overall program days.

FINANCIAL AID:

Financial aid awards are allocated to qualifying participants based on family income and number per household, regardless of district affiliation (see attachment). Therefore, the financial aid funds for the 2007 Junior Lifeguard Program have been budgeted to be $45,000, well over the $37,500 utilized by participating families in the 2006 program year. This 17 percent increase in available aid will accommodate any potential growth in the number of families who need financial assistance due to increased program costs.

CONTRACTING PROCESS:

Not applicable.

CONCLUSION:

Upon approval by the Board of Supervisors, please instruct the Executive Officer to return adopted copies of this letter to the following offices:

1. Consolidated Fire Protection District of Los Angeles County
   Executive Office
   1320 N. Eastern Avenue
   Los Angeles, CA 90063

2. Consolidated Fire Protection District of Los Angeles County
   Lifeguard Division
   2300 Ocean Front Walk
   Venice, CA 90291
   Attention: Mike Frazer, Chief Lifeguard

Respectfully submitted,

P. MICHAEL FREEMAN

PMF:sd

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Officer
Auditor-Controller
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Director, Beaches and Harbors
Director, Parks and Recreation

LOS ANGELES COUNTY FIRE DEPT. JUNIOR LIFEGUARD PROGRAM

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS AND FINANCIAL AID BY DISTRICT

	District 1*		District 2		District 3		District 4		District 5*		Total Part.	Total on FA
YEAR	Total Part.	# on FA	Total Part.	# on FA	Total Part.	# on FA	Total Part.	# on FA	Total Part.	# on FA	per year	per year
1999	13	13	121	51	353	20	1430	19	26	7	1943	110
2000	21	14	113	21	474	7	1626	42	24	2	2258	86
2001	36	14	120	24	530	13	1664	33	34	2	2384	86
2002	14	11	141	41	472	16	1699	54	33	2	2359	124
2003	37	30	169	41	472	18	1595	45	43	3	2316	137
2004	37	34	117	40	477	21	1674	51	15	2	2320	148
2005	46	39	188	47	459	14	1685	35	42	5	2420	140
2006	40	31	180	37	411	9	1665	37	27	2	2323	116

DISTRICT TOTALS												
	District 1*		District 2		District 3		District 4		District 5*		Total Part.	Total on FA
	Total Part.	# on FA	Total Part.	# on FA	Total Part.	# on FA	Total Part.	# on FA	Total Part.	# on FA	(8 years)	(8 years)
	244	186	1149	302	3648	118	13038	316	244	25	18323	947

8 YEAR AVERAGE OF PARTICIPATION AND FINANCIAL AID RECIPIENTS PER DISTRICT												
	31	23	144	38	456	15	1630	40	31	3	2290	118

*There are Junior Lifeguard Programs available through the LA County Dept of Parks and Rec at Santa Fe Dam (District 1), Castaic Lake (District 5), and Bonelli Park/Puddingstone Lake (District 5).
The availability of these programs reduces the number of participants who attend our program from those districts.
The following shows how many additional children attended a Junior Lifeguard Program in their districts.

	District 1 : Santa Fe Dam	District 5: Castaic Lake	District 5: Bonelli Park
2005	66	295	265
2006	86	310	250

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
PROPOSED FEE INCREASE

Notice is hereby given that a public hearing will be held by the Board of Supervisors regarding a fee increase to the Los Angeles County Junior Lifeguard Program, effective summer 2007. The fee increase will accommodate rising staffing costs, preserve the equipment and scholarship budgets, maintain a safe student to instructor ratio, and retain the full number of program days available. If the proposed fee increase is not adopted, the Junior Lifeguard Program schedule for 2007 will have to be reduced to meet the cost-recovery requirement mandated by the Board of Supervisors. The Los Angeles County Fire Department Lifeguard Division supports the proposed fee increase to maintain this premier community beach/ocean safety program.

In compliance with Government Code Section 6062a and Section 66018, this request for approval of the increased fee will be made after all public notification and hearing requirements have been met.

Said hearing will be held on **February 27, 2007 at 9:30 a.m.** in the Hearing Room of the Board of Supervisors, Room 381B, Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street (corner of Temple Street and Grand Avenue) Los Angeles, California 90012.

The Board of Supervisors will consider and may adopt the fee schedule. Further, notice is given that the Board of Supervisors may continue this hearing from time to time.

Written comments may be sent to the Executive Office of the Board of Supervisors at the above address. If you do not understand this notice or need more information, please call (310) 939-7214.

Si no entiende esta noticia o si necesita mas informacion, favor de llamar a este numero (310) 939-7214.