CITY OF BIG BEAR LAKE
39707 Big Bear Boulevard, Big Bear Lake, CA 92315
Phone: (909) 866-5831 | www.citybigbearlake.com

PRESS RELEASE
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Contact: Erica Stephenson, Assistant City Manager/City Clerk
(909) 866-5831

Big Bear Lake Fire Protection District Update

BIG BEAR LAKE, CA – The City of Big Bear Lake Fire Protection (FPD) is committed to keeping the community informed and addressing information shared during recent public meetings regarding the dissolution process of the Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement (JPA) between the City of Big Bear Lake (FPD) and the Big Bear City Community Services District (CSD).

During a recent public meeting a number of statements were made that require clarification. In the interest of transparency, the City has compiled responses to provide clarity:

How long has the Fire Protection District had to prepare and decide to dissolve the JPA?

FPD began the process of dissolution on April 29, 2026.

On February 10, 2026, Citygate Associates presented to the Big Bear Fire Authority (BBFA) a Fire Services review to find solutions to maintain the current JPA and/or provide other options. Citygate recommended two options to achieve financial stability and consistent service levels regionally: Either both agencies partner with the San Bernadino County Fire Protection District (County) or remain in the current partnership and vote to amend and update the JPA. No action was taken to amend the JPA. As a result, on April 29, 2026, the FPD decided to dissolve the JPA and seek contract services with the San Bernadino County Fire Protection District and began the process of dissolution of the JPA.

All BBFA meetings are recorded and can be found by visiting www.bigbearlake.gov/bblfpd.

Are service levels higher in Big Bear Lake?

The service levels for Big Bear Lake and Big Bear City are nearly the same for both regions; the Citygate report does not specify that either region is busier in the day or evening. Additionally, as stated in the Citygate presentation, only 11% of the reported incidents in FY 2024-25 were from the Ski Resorts in the City of Big Bear Lake, and 34% of the reported EMS incidents were visitors. The Citygate presentation reports the incidents/calls from Fiscal Year 2024-25 were as follows:

Call Volume		
	Number	**Percentage**
CSD- Stations 2 + 3	1686	**49.82%**
FPD – Station 1	1698	**50.18%**
Total	3384	**100.00%**

Population 2025		
CSD	12,520	**70.69%**
FPD	5,192	**29.31%**
Total	17,712	**100.00%**

This presentation is available by visiting www.bigbearlake.gov/bblfpd.

Is the Citygate study complete?

Yes. The final report/presentation was presented to the BBFA Board on February 10, 2026. The BBFA Board took no action thereafter.

Why was dissolving the JPA the best option?

The dissolution was based on the decision to improve services while remaining fiscally responsible. Currently, FPD contributes a greater share of funding to the JPA than its partner, CSD, yet receives a lower level of service within Big Bear Lake. The executed JPA requires both agencies to equally fund 50% of the BBFA's operating budget. Given this imbalance in funding and service delivery, FPD elected to dissolve the JPA and instead provide enhanced services to Big Bear Lake using its existing revenue and seeking a contract with the San Bernadino County Fire Protection District.

The JPA is available by visiting www.bigbearlake.gov/bblfpd.

Will my property taxes be raised by contracting with the San Bernadino County Fire Services?

No. The FPD chose to pursue a contract with the County that is within their budget and will not increase property taxes.

What does contracting with the County actually get us?

Currently, there is one (1) fire station in Big Bear Lake (Station 281). In contracting with the County, FPD will see the activation of two (2) stations in addition to Station 281: Moonridge Station and the Boulder Bay Station. The County offered four (4) options to choose from. Of the four (4) options, the FPD chose Option C. Option C is within the FPD budget and would provide better service to property owners and visitors of the City of Big Bear Lake.

Details of all options can be found at www.bigbearlake.gov/bblfpd.

Local Control Stays with the Fire Protection District

"We understand that regional partnerships can raise concerns about losing local voices. We want to reassure you that the decision-authority remains with your elected officials. Your City Council and Fire Protection District Board- who live in and understand our mountain community- will continue to advocate for your needs.

"This partnership with the San Bernadino County Fire Protection District is designed to strengthen service delivery by providing additional resources and tools, not to diminish local control. We remain fully committed to transparency and accountability to the community we serve." – BBLFPD Chair Rick Herrick

Please visit our website at www.bigbearlake.gov/bblfpd to see the following items:

- Big Bear Lake Fire Protection District Timeline of Events,
- Call Volumes during Fiscal Year 2024-25,
- Executed JPA,
- San Bernadino County Fire Protection Service Presentation, and
- Additional helpful links related to Fire Protection Services.

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