



# Sonoma County *Fire Chiefs Association*

*President: Randy Collins*

May 16, 2011

Sonoma County Board of Supervisors  
575 Administration Dr # 100A  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403-2815

Dear Board Members:

It is my pleasure write a letter in support of the Sonoma County Sheriffs Department Helicopter Program, Henry 1, on behalf of the Sonoma County Fire Chief's Association.

In addition to its law enforcement assignment Henry 1 frequently responds to fire, medical and rescue incidents within the county working closely with all fire agencies in Sonoma County. For many years Sonoma County fire agencies have relied upon the Sonoma County Sheriffs Department Helicopter Program to assist with difficult and dangerous rescue operations, firefighting operations and patient transport. Since January 1, 2011 Henry 1 has performed 18 rescues County wide as well as several medical transports.

Henry 1's long line rescue capabilities with the pilot, trained field observer and paramedic, often make rescue operations safer for patients and the firefighters by avoiding the lengthy and dangerous process of hauling victims up steep inclines and difficult terrain. In some of the more remote rescues Henry 1 often arrives and initiates treatment before fire and medical resources arrive.

During firefighting operations Henry 1's water dropping capability provides County fire agencies with the ability to quickly and accurately suppress fires in and around structures when other state air resources are not available. They also provide fire mapping, fire spotting and smoke investigation response during high fire danger days. Last year when Cal Fire air resources were committed fighting the Bodega Fire, Henry 1 with their water dropping capabilities assisted the Rincon Valley Fire District in extinguishing a vegetation in their area.

With its ability to fly at night and under less than desirable conditions Henry 1 provides our patients, who would normally be forced to take a long ground transport, with short transport times, and quick access to the life saving treatment at our local hospitals and trauma center.

Without this valuable resource there would be a significant reduction in life saving and rescue services to the members of our individual communities and to the visitors to our county.



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The Sonoma County Fire Chief's Association fully supports the Sonoma County Sheriffs Department Helicopter Program as it exists today and we hope that you will be able to make the necessary budget adjustments to maintain this valuable program.

Sincerely,

Dan Northern, Vice President  
Sonoma County Fire Chief's Association  
c/o Rincon Valley Fire District  
P.O. Box 530  
Windsor, CA 95492