

Brian Helmick  
Fire Chief



**SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF:**

Bethel Island  
Brentwood  
Byron

Discovery Bay  
Knightsen  
Morgan Territory  
Oakley

April 19, 2019

The Honorable Tim Grayson  
State Capitol Building  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 1116 (Grayson) – Peer Support and Crisis Referral Services Pilot Program.  
(SUPPORT)**

Dear Assemblymember Grayson:

The East Contra Costa Fire Protection District (ECCFPD) is pleased to support your AB 1116, which establishes statewide standards for a Firefighter Peer Support Program with accompanying provisions to protect the confidentiality of the peer supporter and participants in the program.

ECCFPD is a rural funded fire district that protect approximately 249 square miles and over 114,000 residents. The district provides firefighting personnel and emergency medical services to the residents and businesses of the Cities of Brentwood and Oakley and to the Township of Discovery Bay, Bethel Island, Knightsen, Byron, Marsh Creek, and Morgan Territory.

Due to ongoing budgetary constraints, the District's current revenues allow it to operate just three fire stations—down from eight stations in 2010—and fund operation of the CalFire Sunshine station during non-fire season. The reduced level of fire protection service is a growing cause for concern in the District's service area as the population continues to grow. In response to the reduced level of services, the District is currently able to provide, several community leaders and residents have considered proposals to detach from or dissolve the District. These limited resources are an added stressor for our firefighters.

Firefighters regularly respond to fires, stabbings, gun battles and shootings, domestic violence incidents, terrorist acts, automobile accidents, airplane crashes and earthquakes, just to name a few. Firefighters witness young children dying and grieving families. At the same time, they are regularly exposed to communicable diseases and known carcinogens in the course of their work. And, it is not uncommon for a firefighter to be threatened by the individual they are attempting to help during an emergency.

Further, during the firestorms of this past decade, firefighters also have endured a growing stress while worrying about whether their own homes would burn down while on the fire lines protecting others -- often while the safety of their own family was threatened. Additionally, many firefighters are pained when driving through firestorm wreckage, seeing their homes and the homes of friends and neighbors burned to ash without being able to stop and assist or provide comfort. Despite these cruel realities, the call to respond is simple for many California firefighters: it's their job.

**For these reasons, we urge your support on this important bill.**

