

KLAMATH COUNTY FIRE DEFENSE BOARD

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January 28, 2021

Klamath County Commissioners DeGroot, Minty Morris and Boyd

RE: Letter of Support for Klamath County 9-1-1 Dispatchers

As you may know, a National effort is underway to reclassify 9-1-1 emergency communicators, more commonly known as Dispatchers, to First Responders status. You may be surprised to hear that Dispatchers are not already designated in this classification. However, Dispatchers are categorized in a broad "Administrative Support" category. The Klamath County Fire Defense Board strongly supports this reclassification movement.

The term "first responder" is defined under the Department of Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD-8) as, "individuals who in the early stages of an incident are responsible for the protection and preservation of life, property, evidence, and the environment, including emergency response providers, emergency management, public health, clinical care, public works, and other skilled support personnel (such as equipment operators) that provide immediate support services during prevention, response, and recovery operations."

The Klamath County Fire Defense Board believes this lack of professional recognition deserves immediate attention. Ask most firefighters, law enforcement officers, or EMS personnel whether they could withstand the emotional toll and stress the job a dispatcher brings, the majority would tell you they could not. Remove the dispatcher from any emergency incident and the emergency is never mitigated. Without the dispatcher, there is no first responder.

Recently, the Board of Directors of the Klamath 9-1-1 Emergency Communications District passed Resolution 21-01 officially recognizing Klamath 9-1-1 Telecommunicators as First Responders. This acknowledgement is equally supported by the Klamath County Fire Defense Board and signified by approval in our regular meeting, January 28, 2021.

We hope you will consider supporting this effort of reclassification at the State level. Along with endorsement from other counties statewide, we encourage emphasis at our local level for this classification change.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael Cook, President