

**REPORT/RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
AND RECORD OF ACTION**

April 7, 2026

FROM

**DAN MUNSEY, Fire Chief/Fire Warden, San Bernardino County Fire Protection District
TERRY THOMPSON, Director, Real Estate Services Department**

SUBJECT

Non-Financial License Agreement with Hesperia Venture I, LLC for Use of Land for the 2026 Los Flores Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project

RECOMMENDATION(S)

Acting as the governing body of the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District:

1. Find that approval of a non-financial License Agreement with Hesperia Venture I, LLC, for the use of unimproved land for the 2026 Los Flores Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project is an exempt project under the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, Section 15304 – Minor Alterations to Land.
2. Approve the Real Estate Services Department's use of an alternative procedure in lieu of a formal Request for Proposals, as allowed per County Policy No. 12-02 - Leasing Privately Owned Real Property for County Use, to use approximately 1,200 acres of unimproved land (portions of Assessor's Parcel Numbers 0357-171-23-0000, 0397-041-28-0000, 0397-041-29-0000, and 0397-041-30-0000) located south and east of Los Flores Road and the California Aqueduct in Hesperia, for the 2026 Los Flores Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project, for the period of April 14, 2026 through June 16, 2026.
3. Approve a non-financial License **Agreement No. 26-233** with Hesperia Venture I, LLC, including non-standard terms, for the period of April 14, 2026 through June 16, 2026, for the use of approximately 1,200 acres of unimproved land (portions of Assessor's Parcel Numbers 0357-171-23-0000, 0397-041-28-0000, 0397-041-29-0000, and 0397-041-30-0000) located south and east of Los Flores Road and the California Aqueduct in Hesperia, for the 2026 Los Flores Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project, at no cost.
4. Direct the Real Estate Services Department to file the Notice of Exemption in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act.

(Presenter: Terry W. Thompson, Director, 387-5000)

COUNTY AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Improve County Government Operations.

Operate in a Fiscally-Responsible and Business-Like Manner.

Foster Sustainable Development Through Strategic Partnerships.

Provide for the Safety, Health and Social Service Needs of County Residents.

Enhance Readiness for Major Emergency Responses.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Approval of the recommended actions will not result in the use of Discretionary General Funding (Net County Cost). There is no rent or fee charged by Hesperia Venture I, LLC (Owner) to San

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Bernardino County Fire Protection District (SBCFPD) for the use of approximately 1,200 acres of vacant land [portions of Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APN's) 0357-171-23-0000, 0397-041-28-0000, 0397-041-29-0000, and 0397-041-30-0000 located south and east of Los Flores Road and the California Aqueduct in Hesperia (Property).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

SBCFPD has established a strategic plan that includes training to address emergency disasters, such as wildfires, to serve its communities with the best fire protection and to offer a professional and dedicated response to the citizens of San Bernardino County.

Wildfires often occur as a result of hazardous wildland fuels. Hazardous wildland fuels include the grass, brush, trees, and dead vegetation that build up over time and make it easier for a fire to start, spread quickly, and burn hotter. When these fuels get too thick or continuous, especially during dry and windy conditions, they can carry fire rapidly across the landscape and into communities, making it harder and more dangerous for firefighters to control. Reducing these fuels, by thinning vegetation, using prescribed burns, or clearing areas around communities, helps slow fire spread, lowers fire intensity, and gives firefighters a better chance to protect lives, property, and infrastructure.

The 2026 Los Flores Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project (2026 Fuels Reduction Project) provides a combination of instructor-led classroom training and extensive field exercises that include, but are not limited to, hazardous wildland fuels reduction through prescribed fire and live fire training along with the use of all necessary vehicles, machinery, equipment and supplies. The field exercises will reduce hazardous wildland fuels and simulate responding to an active wildfire. This fuels reduction and training is pertinent for SBCFPD to ensure hazardous fuels reduction and preparedness for fire season.

SBCFPD requested that the Real Estate Services Department (RESD) contact the Owner to request the use of the Property for the 2026 Fuels Reduction Project. The proposed actions seek approval of a non-financial License Agreement (License) with the Owner to permit SBCFPD to use the Property to conduct the field exercises of the 2026 Fuels Reduction Project, which will occur from April 14, 2026 through June 16, 2026, at no cost for the use of the Property.

SBCFPD has reviewed the intended use of the Property and has determined that a categorical exemption in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, Section 15304 is appropriate. This exemption allows for minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry and agricultural purposes. The use of the Property will consist of partially or totally removing vegetation, removing hazardous dead or dying vegetation, and cutting fire lines using mechanized equipment.

Summary of License
Terms

Licensor: Hesperia Venture I, LLC
John Ohanian, General Manager

Location: South and east of Los Flores Road and the California Aqueduct in Hesperia (portions of APNs 0357-171-23-0000, 0397-041-28-0000, 0397-041-29-0000, and 0397-041-30-0000)

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Size:	Approximately 1,200 acres of unimproved land
Term:	April 14, 2026 through June 16, 2026
Options:	None
Rent:	None
Improvement Costs:	None
Maintenance:	Not applicable
Utilities:	Not applicable
Insurance:	The Certificate of Liability Insurance, as required by the License, is on file with RESD
Right to Terminate:	SBCFPD may terminate at any time with 24 hours prior written notice

The License includes the following Owner required term that differs from the standard SBCFPD contract:

1. SBCFPD will indemnify and hold harmless the Owner from any and all liabilities for injury to person and damage to property arising out of any negligent act or omission of SBCFPD, its officers, employees, agents, and volunteers in connection with SBCFPD's use of the Property.
 - The SBCFPD standard contract does not require SBCFPD to indemnify the Owner.
 - Potential Impact: By agreeing to indemnify and hold harmless the Owner, SBCFPD could be contractually waiving the protection of sovereign immunity. Claims that may otherwise be barred against SBCFPD, time-limited, or expense-limited could be brought against SBCFPD without such limitations and SBCFPD would be responsible to reimburse the Owner for costs, expenses, and damages.
2. The agreement does not require the Owner to meet SBCFPD's standard insurance requirements.
 - The SBCFPD standard contract requires contractors to carry appropriate insurance at limits and under conditions determined by the County's Risk Management Department.
 - Potential Impact: SBCFPD has no assurance that the Owner will be financially responsible for claims that may arise from the SBCFPD's use of the property, which could result in expenses to SBCFPD should a claim arise.

SBCFPD recommends approval of the License, including the non-standard terms, because the Property best meets the requirements of hazardous fuels reduction and field training for the 2026 Fuels Reduction Project.

PROCUREMENT

This item recommends that the Board approve the License with the Owner through the use of an alternative procedure as permitted in County Policy No. 12-02 – Leasing Privately Owned

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Real Property for County Use (Policy). The Policy is applicable to SBCFPD pursuant to the Board's adoption of this policy on December 17, 2019 (Item No. 73). This Policy provides that the Board may approve the use of an alternative procedure to the use of a formal Request for Proposals (RFP) whenever the Board determines that compliance with the formal RFP requirements would unreasonably interfere with the financial or programmatic needs of SBCFPD, or when the use of an alternative procedure would otherwise be in the best interests of SBCFPD. RESD evaluated available properties within the project area; however, Hesperia Venture I, LLC's property was the only site that met operational requirements, including size, terrain, and proximity necessary to conduct the 2026 Fuels Reduction Project. No other suitable properties were identified that could accommodate the scope and safety requirements of the training exercises.

REVIEW BY OTHERS

This item has been reviewed by County Counsel (John Tubbs II, and Richard Luczak, Deputies County Counsel, 387-5455) on March 16, 2026; San Bernardino County Fire Protection District (Bertral Washington, Deputy Fire Chief, 387-5779) on March 11, 2026; Risk Management (Rebecca Suarez, Director, 386-8723) on March 9, 2026; Purchasing (Alberto Cazares, Lead Buyer, 387-3376) on March 10, 2026; and County Finance and Administration (Ivan Ramirez, 387-4020, and Eduardo Mora, 387-4376, Administrative Analysts) on March 20, 2026.

(BR: 531-2674)

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Record of Action of the Board of Directors
San Bernardino County Fire Protection District

APPROVED (CONSENT CALENDAR)

Moved: Joe Baca, Jr. Seconded: Curt Hagman
Ayes: Col. Paul Cook (Ret.), Jesse Armendarez, Dawn Rowe, Curt Hagman, Joe Baca, Jr.

Lynna Monell, SECRETARY

BY 
DATED: April 7, 2026



cc: SBCFPD - Thompson w/agree
Contractor - c/o SBCFPD w/agree
File - w/agree
MBA 04/7/2026