

Dear Felton Neighbors,

The 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire reminded us how critical the Felton Fire Protection District (FFPD) is to our safety. Operating since 1935, the district is now at a financial crossroads and urgently needs additional funding to remain viable and independent.

The Challenge:

- **Outdated Funding:** FFPD's funding formula has not changed since 1946.
- **Rising Demand:** Annual calls have tripled from 300 in 1999 to over 900 today.
- **Staffing Shortages:** Volunteer numbers have dropped in recent years, mirroring a national trend. Experts say small, rural districts need a core of paid staff backed by volunteers. The proposed assessment would help fund exactly that model.
- **Aging Station, Equipment Overdue for Replacement:** Felton's 72-year-old fire station needs repairs and improvements. One engine is four years past its replacement date, and current funds are inadequate to properly maintain/repair other equipment in a timely manner.
- **Rising Costs:** Community fundraisers are no longer enough to supplement FFPD's small portion of our property taxes. For the first time in 78 years, Felton Fire is asking us for more funding to provide our community the fire and medical emergency response we need.

What's at Stake?

If the proposed assessment fails, Felton Fire will have to dissolve and be taken over by another district. But, according to LAFCO's Executive Officer, any takeover is a multi-year process, and no other tax measure could be proposed and in place for a year and a half if this fails. (Tax rolls are updated once a year, in August. Funds don't come in until Dec./Jan. after that.)

A takeover would mean:

- **Slower Response Times:** A transition would take roughly two years, risking delayed emergency responses for a community with the Valley's second-highest call volume.
- **Loss of Local Control:** Outside agencies won't guarantee Felton's proposed staffing levels, response standards, and commitment to maintaining our local station, nor will they tell us what our service would cost until Felton dissolves and chooses one of them to take over our service. What other financial decision would we make without knowing what it will cost and what we will get? The July 2025 LAFCO report notes it would take County Fire (CSA 48) \$3-4 million to provide the same service that Felton Fire's assessment would fund. Furthermore, if County Fire (CSA 48) were chosen, they could spend Felton tax dollars in other areas.

Why Now?

Passing this assessment ensures funding arrives by December 2026/January 2027 to stabilize the district immediately. At any point in the future, the tax could be reduced or revoked by a vote of the Felton Fire board if they determine it is no longer needed or if they find ways to provide the service for less than anticipated.

Take Action

If you have not received your ballot, contact Felton Fire at 831.335.4422. We encourage you to attend an upcoming Town Hall and check out our website for more information. Please vote to protect Felton's safety, rapid and reliable emergency response, and local autonomy. There are three remaining Town Hall dates at the Felton Fire Station, 131 Kirby Street:

- Saturday, June 27, 2026 11AM - 12:30PM
- Wednesday, July 8, 2026 6PM - 7:30 PM
- Saturday, July 18, 2026 11AM - 12:30 PM

HOW TO VOTE

- Ballot must be **received** by July 24, 2026 - we recommend mailing 10 days ahead in the envelope provided or hand-deliver to Felton Fire, 131 Kirby St. Felton
- Votes to be tallied in public at Felton Fire Station by SCI Consulting at 6PM July 24.

Note: Your ballot shows the exact amount of your individual property's assessment. Funds can only be used for the purposes outlined in the text accompanying the ballot. Annual reporting is mandated, and there will be a Community Oversight Committee reviewing expenditures.

A Quote from LAFCO's July 2025 report:

"A purely volunteer model is not considered practical for a department running 800-900 calls per year. Rural fire districts can remain sustainable by evolving their operational models, such as the transition to a combination or fully career staffing model, hiring a full-time fire chief for consistent leadership and oversight, and securing stable funding through special taxes or benefit assessments approved by local voters. These strategic changes can help ensure Felton FPD can have a long-term viability as a rural fire district."

That is what the proposed assessment will accomplish.

Your YES vote will approve the assessment; a NO vote will reject it.

For more information visit FC4ER.org
Email for questions: FC4ERnow@gmail.com

