

Letter from County Fire Chiefs Leaves Many Questions Unanswered on Ambulance RFP

April 8, 2025



A letter from the Del Norte Fire Chiefs Association to the Del Norte Board of Supervisors, purportedly sent in March of 2023, has been made public.

The Triplicate contacted four acknowledged signatories noted on the letter to share with community the rationale for opposing Del Norte Ambulance (DNAMB) request to “grandfather” the 9-1-1 Emergency Service for a company which has provided emergency services for over 40 years, without serious malfeasance or questionable incidents.

The following fire chiefs signed on to the letter which questioned and challenged DNAMB’s service:

- Lonnie Levi, Chief Klamath Fire Protection District.
- Randy Crawford, Chief Ft. Dick Fire Protection District.
- Nick Karanopoulos, Chief Gasquet Fire Protection District

- Kevin Carey, Chief Crescent City Fire and Rescue.

Each chief failed to respond to The Triplicate's rationale questions and specifics on allegations of sub-standard service.

Smith River Volunteer Fire Chief Ron Simpson did not affix his signature to this letter.

Rationale was requested from each of the fire chiefs for the following:

- The letter is not on any official letterhead but rather what appears to be a blank sheet of paper.
- Full solidarity is claimed, yet the letter excludes the signature of Smith River Volunteer Fire Protection District Chief Ron Simpson.
- The claim of Del Norte Ambulance offering no benefit has not been substantiated. According to North Coast Emergency Medical Services, either a "grandfather" clause or Request for Proposal will end with the same result: An Exclusive Authorization under the umbrella of NCEMS.
- What are the specific instances of inconsistencies? Please note log instances which you have personally observed.
- The allegations of frequent extended arrivals should be made public. Please provide these "multiple instances" alleged.
- What are public expectations from stakeholders that did not meet the standards you claim?

An additional request was made by The Triplicate on who developed this fire chief's letter.

Since Crescent City Fire and Rescue Chief Kevin Carey was directly asked what his role has been in the RFP process, Carey responded in a February 24 text, "I will not be commenting on the RFP process." His signature on the chief's letter contradicts this perceived role.

Sandler responded to the letter, "I'm disappointed the fire chiefs did not respond to us directly with their concerns rather than bypassing that process with this public letter. Del Norte Ambulance is proud of its record in answering calls, yet continues to seek improvement." The current contract with the County calls for a one minute (daytime) and two minute (nighttime) response on a minimum of 80 percent of 9-1-1 emergency calls. Sandler underscored DNAMB's promptness in responding to emergency calls.

The Triplicate continues to investigate the RFP process and potential impact on the community.