



County of Sonoma

State of California

Date: January 27, 2026

Item Number: _____

Resolution Number: _____

☐ 4/5 Vote Required

Resolution Of The Board Of Supervisors Of The County Of Sonoma, State Of California, Honoring Chief Benjamin J. Nicholls For His Exemplary Service To The County Of Sonoma

Whereas, Chief Nicholls has dedicated over three decades to public service, first as a seasonal firefighter in Occidental for the California Department of Forestry and then in positions of increasing responsibility, culminating in his appointment as the West Division Operations Chief for the CalFire Sonoma-Lake-Napa Unit in March 2019; and

Whereas, Chief Nicholls held key leadership roles with CalFire during the Sonoma Complex Fires of 2017, the Kincade Fire of 2019, the LNU Lightning Fires of 2020, the Glass Fire of 2020, and the Point Fire of 2024; and

Whereas, Between wildfires Chief Nicholls was a staunch supporter of adopting technology to improve the ability to rapidly detect and locate wildfires early, and worked diligently with the Sonoma County Department of Emergency Management and Alert California to help develop an effective camera network that gave the firefighter critical and timely information; and

Whereas, Chief Nicholls worked diligently with Sonoma County Sheriff and other agencies to develop the County's Evacuation Zone system, providing an important tool for rapidly communicating evacuation information among public safety agencies and with the public; and

Whereas, Chief Nicholls made prescribed fire implementation a priority in the County to

create a more wildfire resilient landscape as well as increasing chances of containing future wildfires. The CAL FIRE West Division firefighters have treated over 5,200 acres during the last five years along with fire practitioners from other fire agencies, State Parks, County Parks, prescribed burn entities, as well as individual property owners; and

Whereas, Chief Nicholls's tireless efforts have made Sonoma County a substantially safer place, highlighted by the fact that his efforts contributed significantly to the fact that there have been no fatalities and fire fighters have been able to focus on suppression of the fire rather than rescue trapped civilians; and

Whereas, Chief Nicholls fostered partnerships across the County between CAL FIRE, Local Fire Agencies, the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office, and the Sonoma County Department of Emergency Management utilizing all of the improvements made since 2017 including rapid evacuation, technologies including satellite connectivity, and the Counties All Call Mutual Aid system to respond rapidly and decisively to all fire threats; and

Whereas, Chief Nicholls retired from CAL FIRE on the 22nd of December, 2025 with over 31 years of service to his County.

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors hereby honors and commends Chief Benjamin J. Nicholls for his exemplary service, expresses deepest appreciation for his dedication and contributions to Sonoma County, and extends best wishes for a fulfilling and well-deserved retirement.

Supervisors:

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| Rabbitt: | Coursey: | Gore: | Hopkins: | Hermosillo: |
| Ayes: | Noes: | Absent: | Abstain: | |

So Ordered.