

## **CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION STAKEHOLDER COUNCIL**

### **RECOMMENDATION TO SUPPORT COUNTY-WIDE FUNDING FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES IN MILLCREEK AND THE COTTONWOOD CANYONS**

**WHEREAS**, the proposed Salt Lake County Budget includes a cut in funding for fire and emergency services in Millcreek and the Cottonwood Canyons of \$647K in 2023 and \$1.29M in 2024.

**WHEREAS**, since 2013, Salt Lake County has subsidized \$3.175M for fire and emergency services in Millcreek and the Cottonwood Canyons because they are considered recreation areas. The amount has not changed since 2013.

**WHEREAS**, the current cost to provide fire and emergency services to these recreation areas is \$5.78M in 2022, with an estimated increase to \$6.69M in 2023.

**WHEREAS**, the shortfall has been shared by Unified Fire Service Area (UFSA) residents' property taxes. (UFSA members include: Copperton, Kearns, Alta, Emigration Canyon, Magna, Brighton, Taylorsville, White City, Midvale, Millcreek, Eagle Mountain, and unincorporated SLCo).

**WHEREAS**, UFA data shows that calls for emergency service in the canyons are disproportionately attributable to the estimated 4 million visitors to the canyons annually.

**WHEREAS**, proposed cuts by Salt Lake County will result in one of three actions:

- Decrease the level of service in the canyons, causing delayed response time of at least 30 minutes or more depending on traffic and weather.
- Share the funding shortfall among all UFSA residents, although it seems unfair that the 285,000 residents of UFSA should pay this extra amount when 1.2M residents in Salt Lake County utilize and benefit from the canyon recreation areas.
- Implement a Special Assessment to Brighton and Alta to make up the difference, although residents of Alta and Brighton are already paying their portion of the cost to receive UFA service.

**WHEREAS**, the additional burden created by the visitors to the canyons should be shared equally by all who enjoy and might need emergency services in these recreation areas.

**THEREFORE**, the Stakeholders Council recommends that the CWC urge Salt Lake County not to reduce its contribution for emergency services but instead increase the county-wide contribution to cover the current shortfall\* for emergency services to these important recreation areas.

\*This would be an increase of \$1,015,784 (for 3-person UFA staffing) or \$1,919,566 (for 4-person UFA staffing) to Salt Lake County's canyon-wide contribution.