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Sent: Monday, August 17, 2026 4:10 PM

To: gailfeldman@juno.com

Cc: David Aranda <DAranda@kppcsd.org>; Mike Gancasz <MGancasz@kppcsd.org>

Subject: Evacuation Drill Planning

Hello Gail,

Thank you so much for reaching out and for your interest in conducting an evacuation drill. When planning an exercise like this, I think the most important first step is to clearly identify **what we are trying to learn**, establish the measures we will use to determine whether the exercise was successful, and, whenever possible, design the scenario around lessons from a real-world event.

One important consideration is understanding how an evacuation would actually occur during a wildfire. Once a significant fire is underway, Fire Department resources are typically committed to managing the incident itself. The Fire Department may identify which areas are threatened and recommend evacuation priorities, but the actual evacuation process is generally coordinated by law enforcement. As a result, residents should not necessarily expect to see firefighters directing traffic or moving through neighborhoods during an evacuation; our personnel would most likely be engaged at the fire.

Another challenge is that a real evacuation would not occur in a vacuum. If conditions were severe enough to require evacuating portions of El Cerrito or Kensington, there is a reasonable possibility that neighboring areas of Berkeley and Richmond would also be experiencing evacuation activity. Traffic would therefore be entering the same regional transportation network at the same time, potentially creating congestion extending all the way to the freeway system. A small-scale drill may have difficulty reproducing those conditions realistically.

For example, a neighboring jurisdiction recently conducted an evacuation exercise involving approximately 80 vehicles. While that provides some useful experience, it represents less than 1% of the vehicles that might need to move during a large-scale evacuation. Because of that difference in scale, I'm not sure that simply measuring how quickly a relatively small number of participating vehicles can move from one location to another will provide us with particularly useful information about a real evacuation.

Where I believe an exercise could provide significant value is **testing the emergency notification process in Kensington**. Notification is the first critical step in any evacuation, and limited cellular coverage remains one of our most significant vulnerabilities. Before residents can evacuate successfully, they must first receive the warning, understand what they are being asked to do, and know where they should go.

For that reason, I would recommend that we begin by defining an objective around emergency notification—for example, determining what percentage of participating residents actually receive the alert, how quickly they receive it, through which communication method they receive it, and whether they understand the instructions.

That could provide us with actionable information about a real vulnerability and help us identify improvements before an actual emergency occurs.

I'm certainly happy to work with you and the committee on developing the exercise. I just want to make sure that whatever we do produces useful information that can genuinely improve community safety rather than simply demonstrating that we can move a small number of vehicles under controlled conditions.

Thank you again,

Eric Saylor

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**“You don’t always control your circumstances, but you can always control your response.”
— Jim Mattis, Call Sign Chaos**