

To the Board of East Fork Fire

My name is Dennis McDuffee and I am a broker/developer here in Douglas County. I have been doing projects here since the late 90's. In the last five years there has been a dramatic change in the entire permit process. Everything got very difficult and very expensive. With two submittals there is a disconnect that is frustrating to say the least. Once you get approval from DC then the applicant has to go back again for EFFD. More fees are charged and then the waiting game starts again. At this point there has been a significant expense on the applicant and as you can imagine extreme frustration. When you call over to EFFD and try to speak to Chief Ray or send an email the responses are often short and curt, or none at all. When I am trying to organize the construction of a project this information is critical.

I urge the board to consider three things. One is accepting written bids from contractors in lieu of the ICC table. If DC is willing, then there should be no reason EFFD should be any different. I do believe that in some cases the ICC tables work, but not all the time. There should be some flexibility. The second is to have one submittal like it used to be. Douglas county and EFFD used to work together. There was one fee paid to DC, DC then would pay EFFD. The way it is now we are being double dipped. The third thing is to have uniformity on the fee schedule with other fire districts and DC. EFFD exponentially increases after a certain dollar figure. In my particular case the build cost of four buildings is \$1.8 plus \$250K for the office. EFFD value my project at over \$7 million. EFFD fees are assessed at almost \$70000. This is unacceptable. I believe when the board voted they did not know the ramifications to the community. I urge the board to move quickly on this issue. I also think that either credits or a reimbursement is in order for the people who have had to pay the increased fire fees since this was implemented in June of 2024.

It is my hope that we can make this process less painful. It's not supposed to be this hard.



Gary Thurm <threecastlesengineering@gmail.com>

## Letter to East Fork Fire

Gary Thurm <threecastlesengineering@gmail.com>

Tue, Jul 15, 2025 at 11:51 AM

To: Gary Thurm <threecastlesengineering@gmail.com>, Dennis McDuffee <dennis@interoalpinesierra.com>

07/15/25

Attn: East Fork Fire Protection District Board of Directors

My client, Dennis McDuffee & Ray Van Winkle have been in the planning stages for the Sawmill Storage project in Gardnerville and just outside the town boundary on industrial zoned land. We have the site improvement plans approved as well as the building department approval, pending approval from East Fork Fire. Besides the office building, there are 3 storage buildings (sprinklered). The building department used the accepted bids in lieu of the ICC Valuation tables when calculating the permit fees and plan review fees (Tim Davis had original calculated fees based on ICC valuation tables but did not know we had accepted bids). Building Permit Fees for all 3 buildings came to \$9714 and plan review fees totalling \$6314 (65% of permit fees and .35% of the accepted bids) based on accepted bids for the foundation and structure installed of \$1.8M. The plans had been submitted to East Fork Fire with the same bids in early May. The EF portal does not calculate a valuation, rather the applicant inputs the valuation and in this case was based on the accepted bids. The state fire marshal follows NAC477.750 and uses the ICC tables for commercial construction in the absence of an accepted bid. Deputy Chief Ray brought this to the board last year, which was approved essentially removing the "applicant valuation" and only using the ICC tables. Her valuation for the 3 buildings was \$7,186,710, exactly 4 times more than the accepted bids. Once I started looking at the valuation tables approved on 6/18/24 by this board, I noticed that the plan review fee as a % of the valuation was much higher in the upper valuations than what the NAC, the state fire marshals amended fee schedule from the NAC as well as the previously approved schedule from Aug 1, 2020. In this case 0.7% of approx. \$7.2M valuation, charging review fees of \$49669. \$50k to review 3 pre-manufactured steel buildings or 2.75% of actual construction costs.

This is way out of line with other jurisdictions and much higher than the and in talking to Chief Ernst, he is going to look into the fee schedule and also ask that the board consider following the NAC and state fire marshal and look at accepted bids when calculating fees for plan review.

I hope that the board does so as these kind of costs can stop a project in its tracks or prolong the county and East Fork Fire from receiving the property taxes based on completed construction.

Lastly, NAC and the state fire marshal expect that the fire departments that have their own boards when determining plan review fees do so such that the funds are used solely for plan review and review annually to make adjustments on what was budgeted as an expense for plan review or cost of labor and what the fire department charges for plan review. It's called fiscal responsibility.

Thank you,

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I'm Peggy Ristorcelli. I've lived in the Wildland Urban Interface, in Sheridan Acres for 45 years. We have 95 homes on half-acre lots. There is one way out, by the Sheridan fire station. Half acres lots – that means that every neighbor's action (or inaction) directly affects their immediate neighbors and ultimately our ability to evacuate.

I've been actively involved with fire safing my neighborhood for 18 years, first with the Nevada Fire Safe Council, then on my own, then with Fire Adapted Nevada and now, working with Janet Melander, as a Firewise community. 18 years is a long time. Yes, we have made progress. But to my not-expert eyes, we are not a fire safe community. The 2023 CWPP rated Sheridan as having moderate fire danger. That's not great for 18 years of work. This is frustrating.

I worry, still, about fire spreading through our neighborhood along lot lines. I worry about people without defensible space. I worry about their neighbors. I worry about evacuation through our single ingress/egress.

I have read through the 2023 CWPP. I assume this is the guideline we are all following. There's a focus on neighborhood initiatives to achieve goals through education and awareness, <sup>and</sup> by neighbors setting examples and helping each other.

Over the past <sup>18</sup> years we have offered to the neighborhood – meetings on a myriad of topics. Educational materials. Newsletters. Defensible space inspections. Curbside chipper programs. Free debris bins for flammable waste disposal.

We are a friendly and cohesive neighborhood; we have neighbors who set good examples. There's lots of neighbors who are willing to lend a hand.

No matter what we try, we have a large group of non-participating homeowners.

? All the CWPP's community-based approaches? I've tried all of them. For 18 years. It's not <sup>been</sup> an effective <sup>in</sup> solution for Sheridan. It's kinda the definition of insanity. We need something new.

There's another part of the CWPP that I question. NV Energy reports completion of fuels reductions projects along the Foothill corridor and all related neighborhoods, including vegetation removal, pole grubbing and fire wrapping poles. But this has not been completed in Sheridan. I have tried contacting NV Energy but have hit multiple dead ends.

There's not time here to discuss the CWPP in detail but there's lots of mention of collaboration of fire services and landowners. Janet and I would like to know what collaborative efforts you suggest for Sheridan. We think that a badge and a uniform would be more effective than our efforts. We need help.

If you have resources available and are willing to help us, I am leaving our contact information.

Janet Melander

Peggy Ristorcelli

Dated July 15, 2025