



Another message from your Fire Chief regarding the Timber Fire and now Plaskett Fire;

A week ago we were, by almost all accounts, feeling pretty good about where we were with the Timber Fire. We all knew a long road still laid ahead of us. Well that road just became a lot longer and whatever end may have been in sight is now blurred by the smoke of yet another wildfire; this time on the South Coast - the new Plaskett Fire.

When the Timber Fire started we were very fortunate with the weather pattern and fire behavior. We were able to literally work with the fire, helping it navigate around neighborhoods and structures without any losses. Well those favorable weather conditions have since changed and the fire has become much more active as you've all seen, nearly tripling in size since my last message and putting up some impressive plumes. The weather we have experienced over the past several days, which has been labeled as critical fire weather, has been more normal for our area, especially in late August.

Earlier this week, CalFire IMT 1 team transitioned command to the current team, California Inter-Agency IMT 3, who took the incident in stride. The new team, who I am working closely with, is dealing with a very dynamic and complex situation, especially with a new start some 35 miles south in an area that hasn't seen a significant fire in more than 5 decades. I have full confidence in the team's ability to manage these complex and expanding incidents.

As you have all seen, there is a new road closure going into effect today at 1 pm. This is an important and necessary step to help control the area and allow crews to safely work in the fire zone. PG&E may need to de-energize the lines should they be eminently threatened. This will have significant impacts on all of us in Big Sur and south to the end of the line. Efforts to move through this critical period efficiently is on the team's mind but the closure is all subject to the fire's behavior and the operational success which is all yet to be determined. The message here is patience. We will all need to exhibit a lot of patience over the next week or more.

A note on the new Plaskett Fire: when Big Sur Fire arrived at scene yesterday morning, crews immediately began checking in with the residents of Los Burros Road, to make sure they were aware and ready to leave if necessary. The fire was burning deep in a canyon with no vehicle access. Big Sur Fire's Hand Crew hiked down to the fire some 2 miles in steep rugged terrain, and cut handline directly on the fire's edge, for more than 8 hours. 4 other Big Sur Fire apparatus and 10 more firefighters also responded. The Timber Fire command team immediately diverted resources to the Plaskett fire, including aircraft, which is a testament to their commitment to protecting our community. Big Sur Fire's presence will ramp back up as we work both fires in step with our mutual aid partners. I will remain closely connected with the incident management team and all of you.

Thank you for the outpouring of support with food, drinks and other supplies for the firefighters who are all so grateful. This is going to be an even longer haul than originally thought and we will need your continued support to get through it. Please keep checking our website bigsurfire.org, inciweb, and other apps like Watch Duty or Wildfire Intel for more information.

Thank you all for your efforts, patience and trust of Big Sur Fire.

Sincerely,

Matt Harris
Fire Chief