



A message from your Fire Chief regarding the Dolan Fire;

Dear Beloved Big Sur Residents and Friends,

Big Sur and its residents are no stranger to fire. We have faced many over the years and have always been strong and resilient as a community to overcome the challenges associated with them. Last week, California was bombarded with a lighting event resulting in well over 300 fires across the state, all needing attention and resources. Big Sur seemingly escaped unscathed that night and there was a sense of relief but also disbelief by many, myself included. Over the next few days, the heavy smoke generated from the nearby River and Carmel Fire's coupled with the intense heat wave made it feel as if Big Sur was already burning.

When the call came in for a vegetation fire in the area of Dolan Ridge, we could only hope that it was just the glow emitting from one of the nearby fires. As more information came in, we learned that it was spotted by an infrared satellite mounted camera through the thick smoke and was estimated at 100 acres high up on the ridge. Big Sur Fire quickly mobilized with nearly every apparatus and 20 personnel. It became readily obvious we had a large fire from the intense crimson red glow filtering through the dark smoke and that it would likely become an extended incident. Crews immediately went into notification and evacuation mode of Dolan Ridge and surrounding residences and were successful in getting everyone out safely. Crews also worked tirelessly through the night preventing the fire from crossing Highway 1 from rollout of which there were over a dozen occurrences.

Big Sur has always been in focus when a fire starts and this time is no different however, we are seeing unprecedented need across the state for the exact same resources which leaves few to none for us here for the first time in recent memory. Our responding partners including the US Forest Service and CalFire were only able to send a few engines and hand crews to help because nearly all other resources were committed to other incidents. The thick smoke clinging to the coast has also shut down the use of air support short term which has made it even more apparent this will be a long duration incident.

Today, an Incident Management Team (CIIMT2) mobilized and will be assuming command of the Dolan Fire starting tomorrow morning. I have been involved in the transition and planning processes much to our benefit and stressed the importance of timely and accurate information getting out to our community. They are committed to that end and are committed to success with managing this incident which is now well of 8000 acres with multiple enclaves and structures threatened. The circumstances surrounding the start of this fire are unclear but certainly suspicious and are being fully investigated by a Federal Investigative Team that will generate official statements regarding it.

Big Sur Fire is very involved supplying firefighters with local knowledge, engines and water tenders and continue to collaborate at the management level ensuring our community priorities are heard and addressed. Current fire conditions, evacuation warnings and orders are being updated by the Incident Management Team and will be released first thing tomorrow morning by the Public Information Officers.

We must all remain patient with each other and the process and that we plan ahead as best as possible for imminent evacuations to both the north and south of the fire and that we also remain tight as a community as we have done so many times before.

Thank you all for your continued support and trust of Big Sur Fire,  
Sincerely,

Matt Harris  
Fire Chief