



# Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies

## Motorist Aid Programs 2024 Year End Report to the SAFE Board March 7, 2024

### Incident Responder Grants



### Call Boxes



### Freeway Service Patrol





## SAFE & Motorist Aid



- California Legislature established Service Authorities for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE) to encourage development of motorist aid system comprised of multiple service elements and infrastructure along the Freeway and Freeway System to enable motorists in need of assistance to obtain aid
- Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) serves as the SAFE for Ventura County
- Funding provided by a \$1 annual vehicle registration fee on all vehicles registered in Ventura County
- Ventura County Motorist Aid Programs Includes **Freeway Service Patrol**, **Incident Responder Grants** and **Highway Emergency Call Boxes**.







# Presentation Outline

## 1. Freeway Service Patrol

- Service Changes
- FSP Assist Data
- Customer Surveys

## 2. Incident Responder Grants

- Overview
- Award Summary

## FSP & IRGP Questions?

## 3. Call Box Program

- Overview
- Call Data
- Contractor Issues
- Options Moving Forward

## Call Box Program Discussion







Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies

# Freeway Service Patrol 4<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary





# FSP Overview & Scope

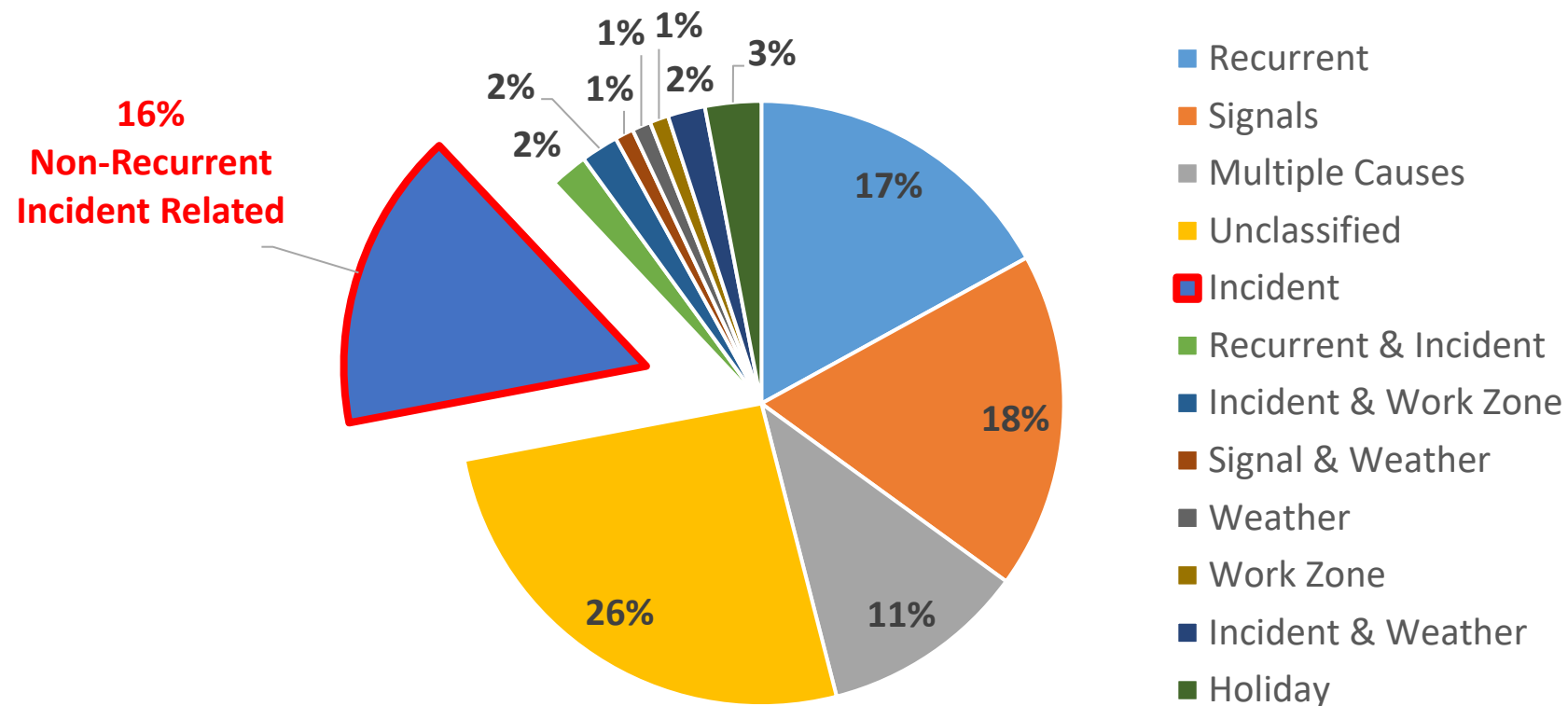
- 24<sup>th</sup> California County to provide FSP services
- Partnership between Caltrans, CHP, and SAFE
- Fleet of continuously roving tow trucks
- Operate during peak-traffic, morning and afternoon
- Assist motorists, remove debris, tow disabled vehicles
- Types of FSP services provided:
  - Jump starts
  - Provide a gallon of gas
  - Refill radiators
  - Change a flat tire
- 10 minutes per assist
- Tow to an approved drop point
- All services are provided at **no charge to the motorist**





# Ventura County Highway Congestion

Causes of Delay on Ventura County Highways - TDADS 2019



- 4,300,000 Hours of Annual Vehicle Delay
- \$112,640,000 Annual User Cost of Vehicle Delay





# FSP Service Changes Effective July 1, 2024

## ☐ Beat 101-2 Extension

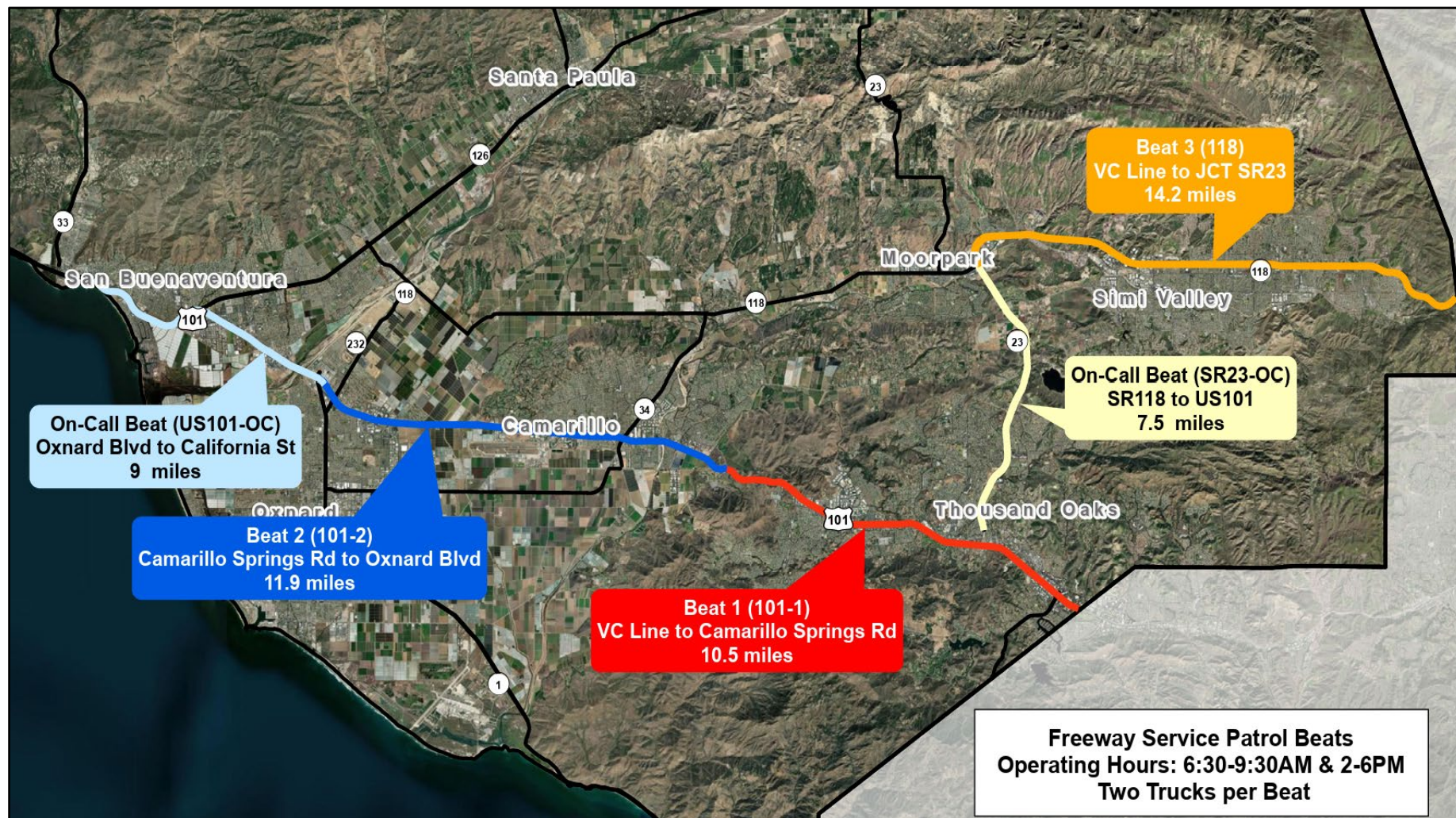
- + 2.7 Miles
- Camarillo Springs Rd to Oxnard Blvd

## ☐ Two “On Call” Beats

- US101 - Oxnard Blvd to California St
- SR23 - SR118 to US101

## ☐ Modified Shift Hours

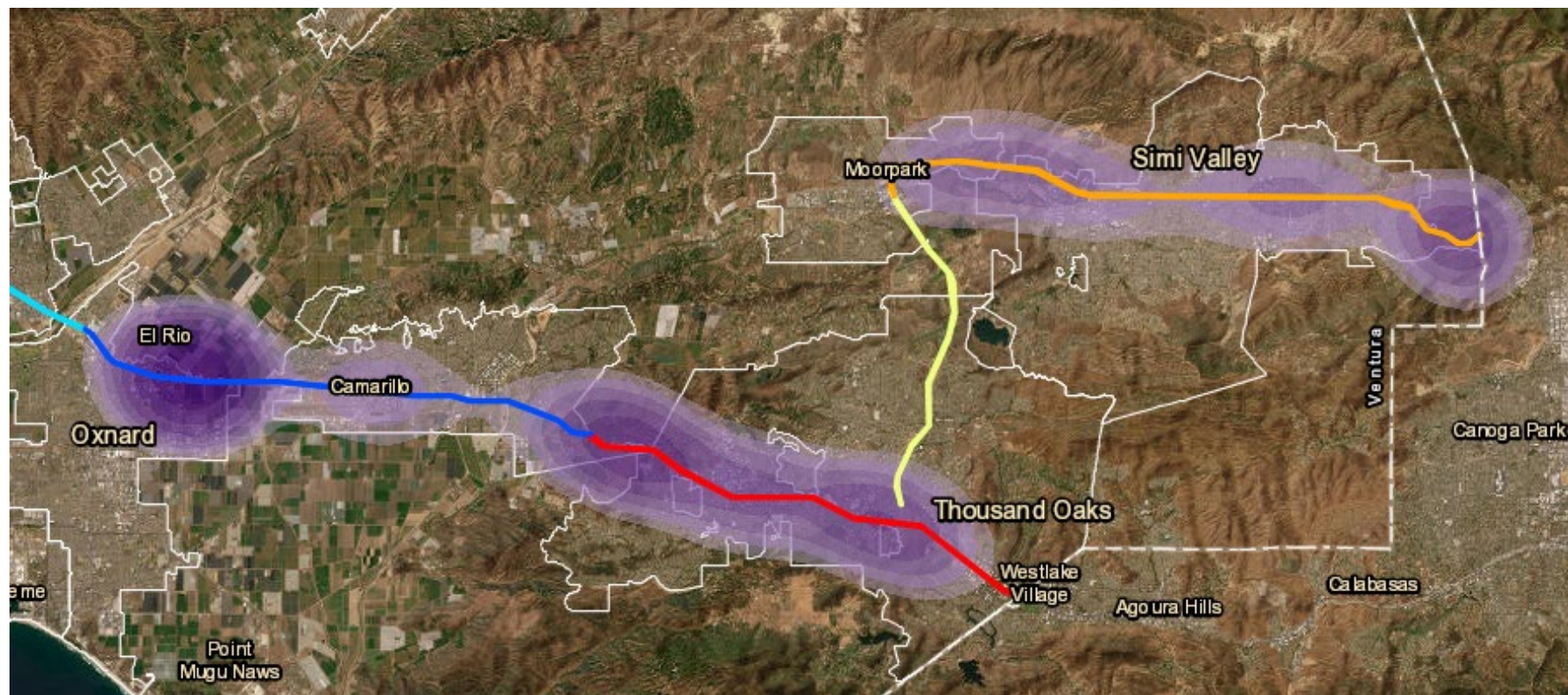
- 6:30AM to 9:30AM
- 2:00PM to 6:00PM







# FSP Assist Data 2024



- 3,365 direct motorist assists & 6,520 total in 2024
- Average 3.6 FSP responses per service hour
- 3/1 Benefit to Cost Ratio (Delay, Emissions, and Fuel Savings / ~\$100 per Truck Hour)

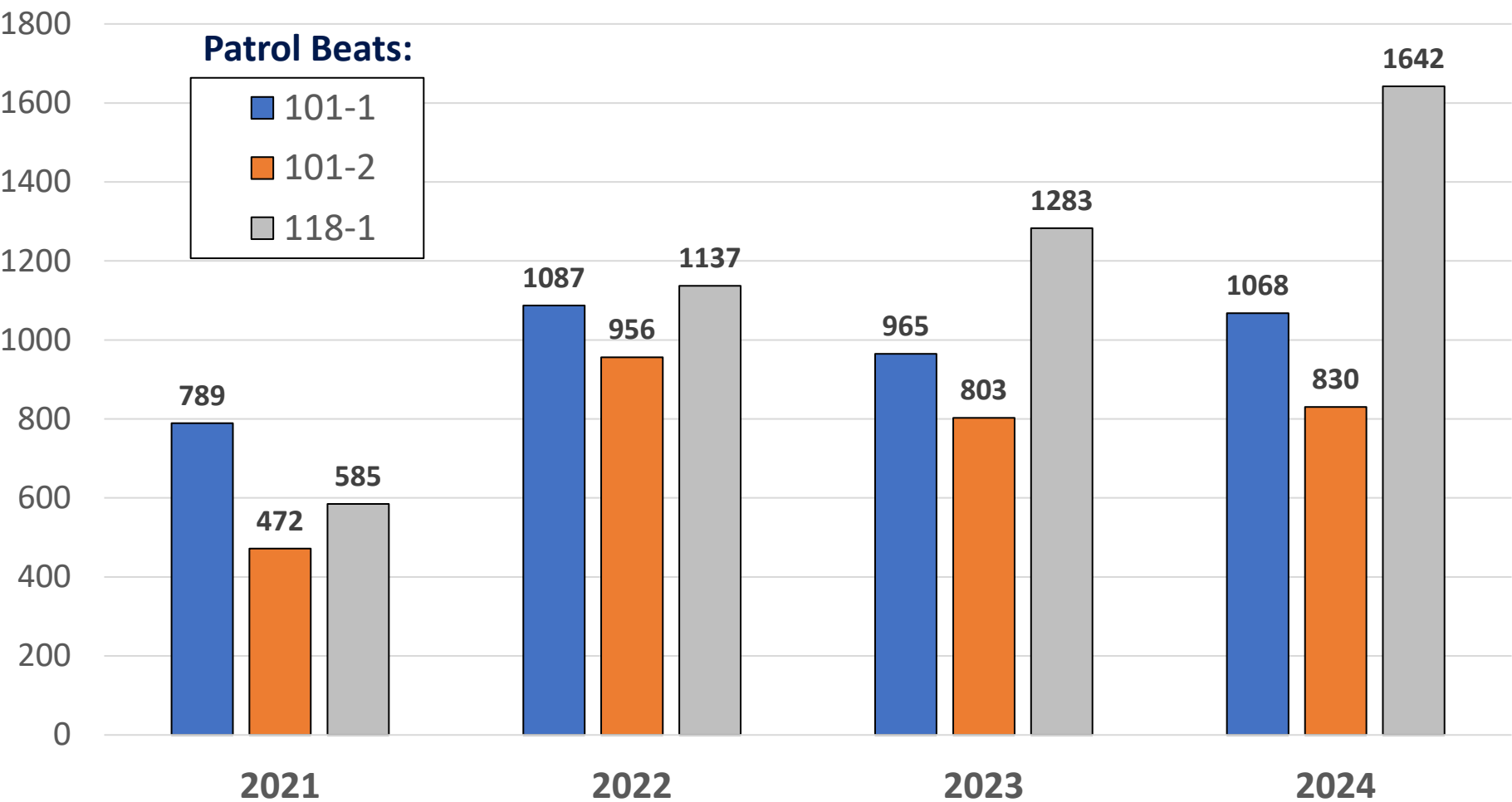




# FSP Assists – Patrol Beat



Direct FSP Assists by Patrol Beat - YOY

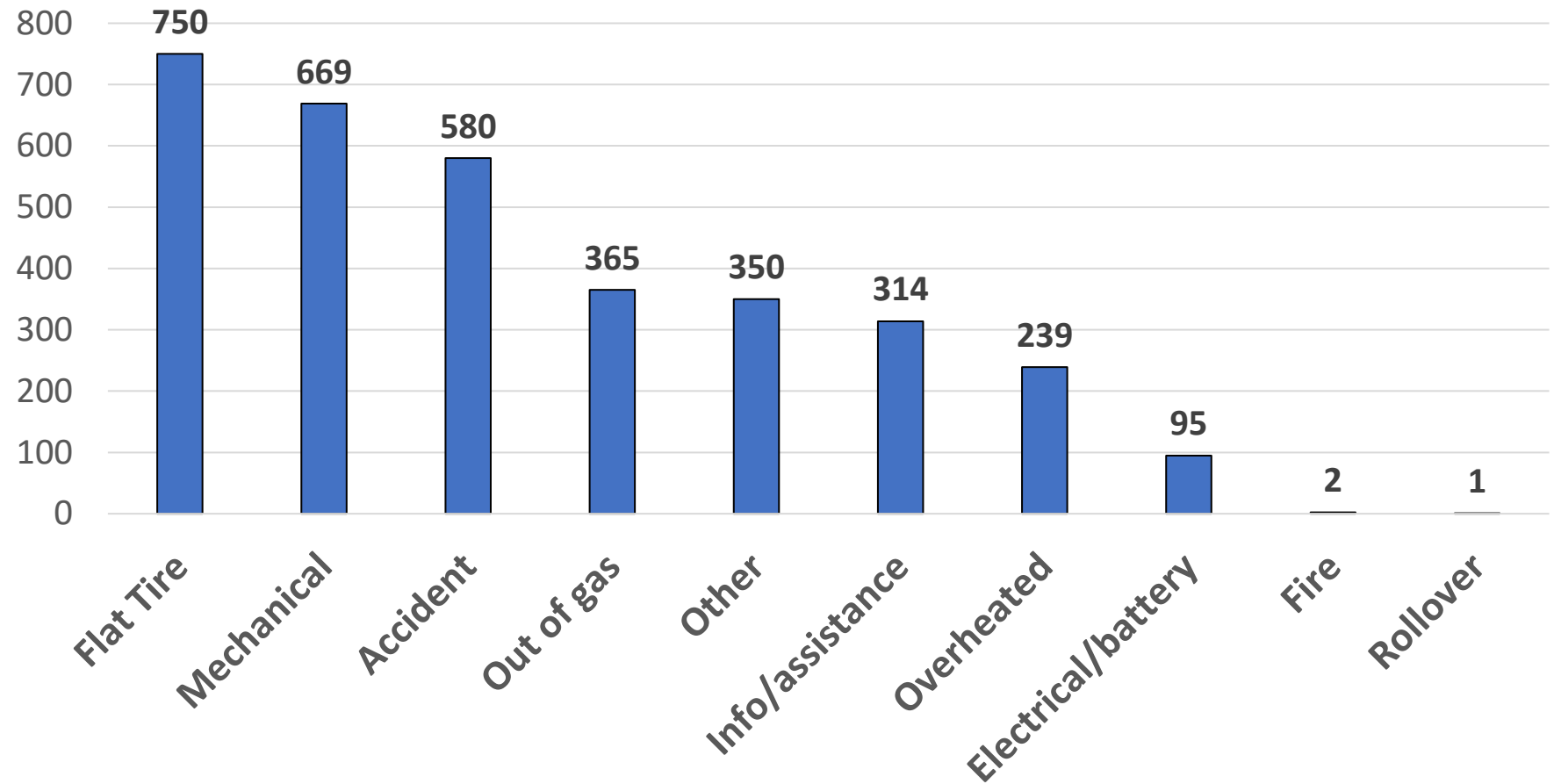






# FSP Assists – Vehicle Problem

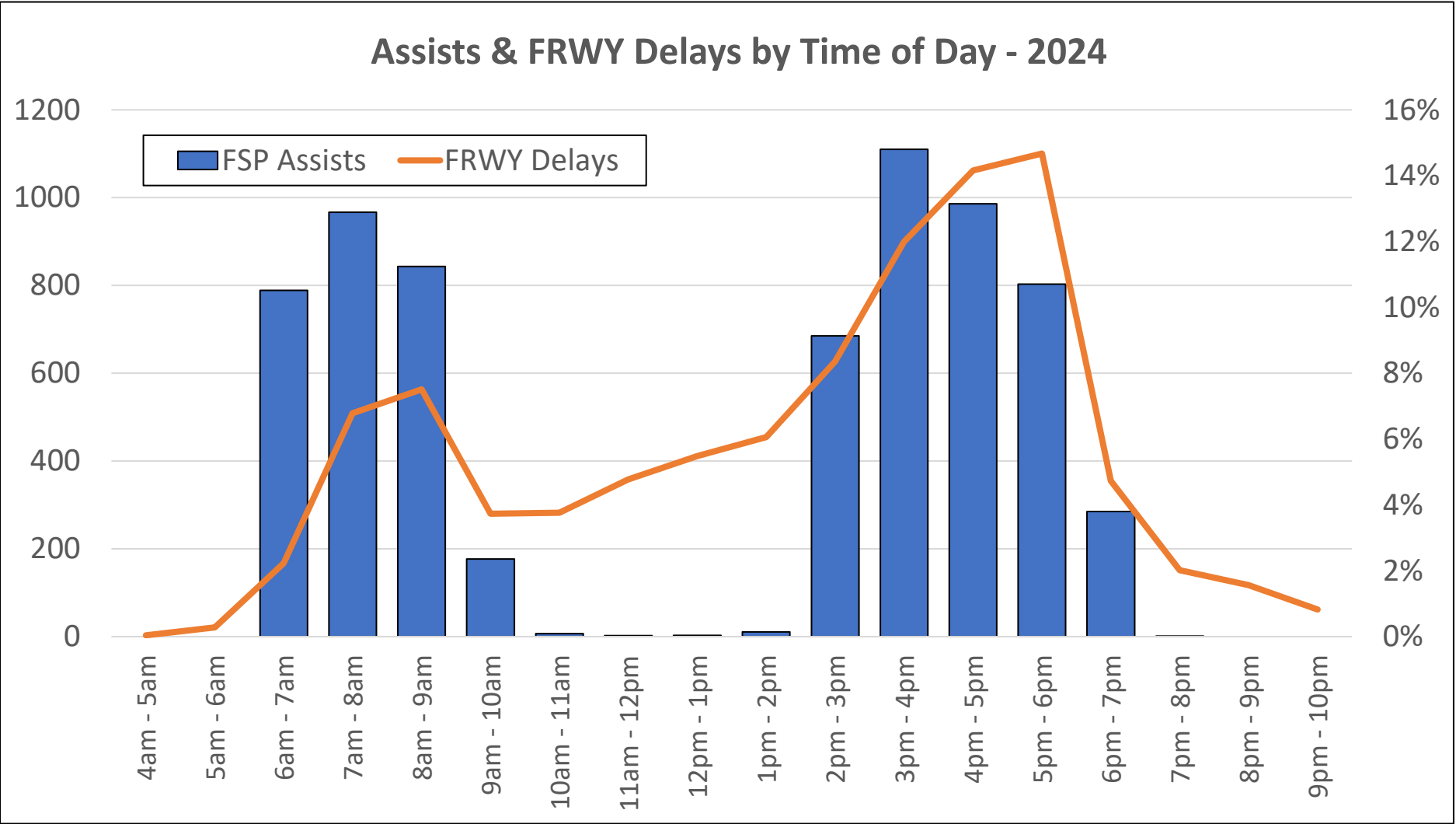
Direct FSP Assists - Vehicle Problem 2024







# FSP Assists – Time of Day

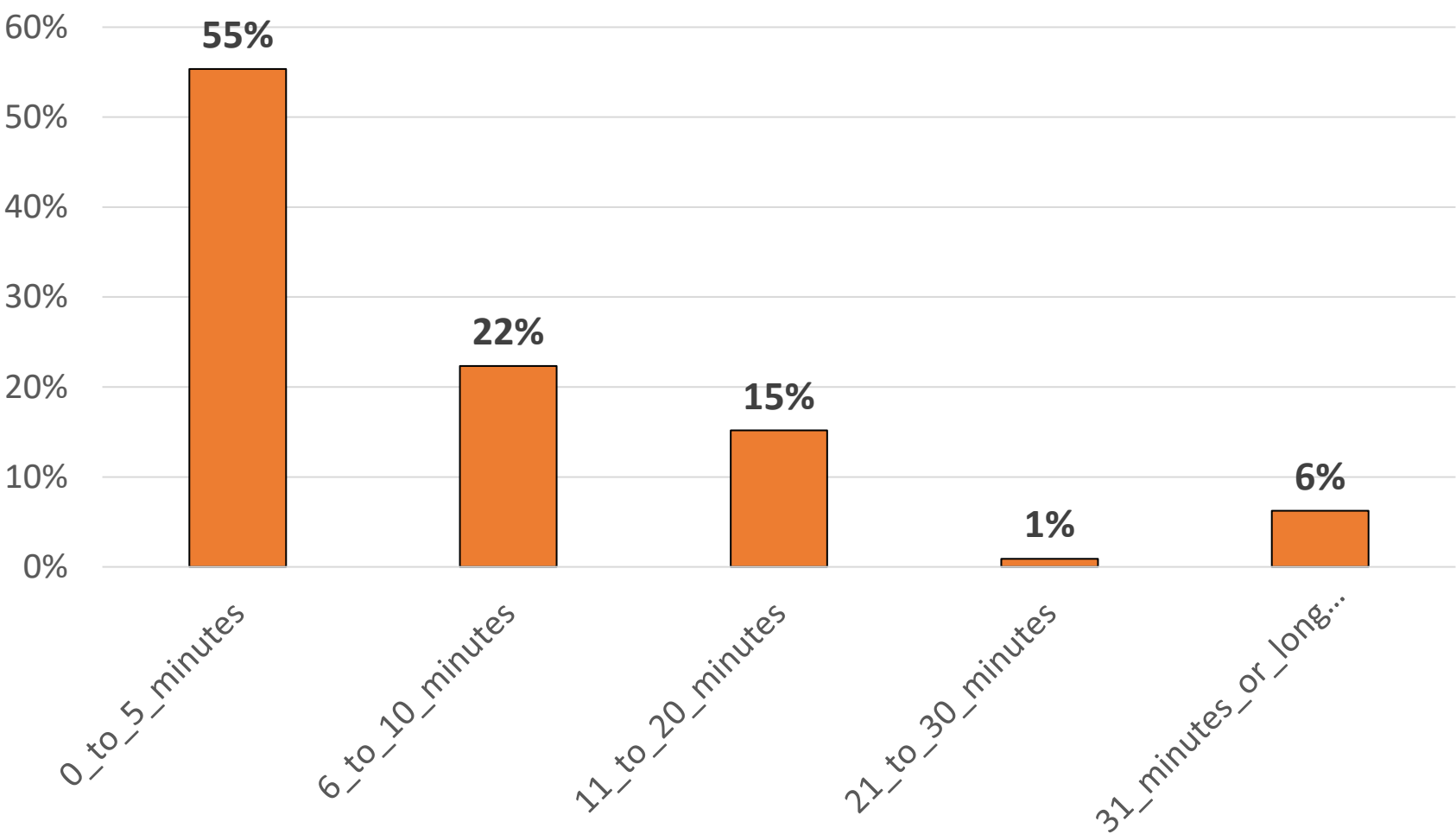






# FSP Assists – Customer Surveys 2024

Customer Survey - How Long Until FSP Arrived?





[illegible]



**Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies**

# **Incident Responder Grant Program**

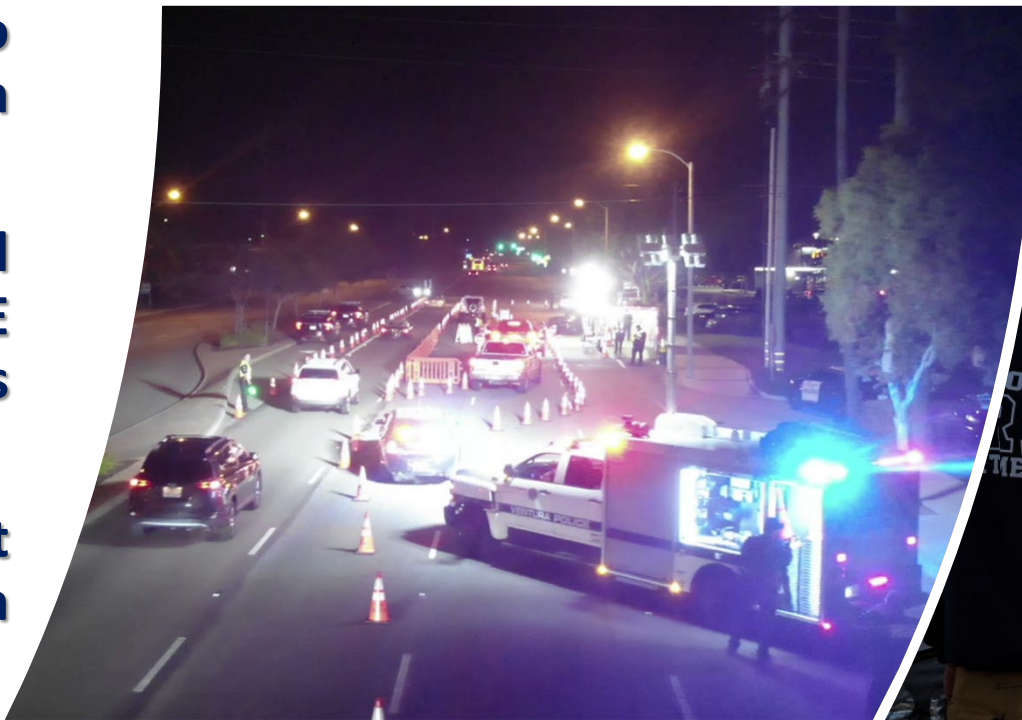






# Incident Responder Grant Program

- June 2019, SAFE Board Established the Incident Responder Grant Program.
- IRGP provides grant assistance to local first responders for equipment related to motorist incidents on SAFE network.
- Grants are budgeted only when the SAFE Fund Balance allows (Biennial review).
- Round 4 call for grant proposals expected in 2026







## IRGP Round 3 Awards

Agency	Request Description	Nexus to SAFE Network	Amount Requested
<b>Camarillo PD</b>	Opticom Signal Preemption: - 21 Vehicle Emitters - 52 Intersection Receivers	Incident Response Time	\$ 500,000.00
<b>Oxnard FD</b>	Opticom Signal Preemption: - 8 Vehicle Emitters	Incident Response Time	\$ 72,000.00
<b>Oxnard PD</b>	2 FARO P150 Laser Scanners (Incident Scene Mapping)	Collision Investigation Time	\$ 122,852.00
<b>Port Hueneme PD</b>	PD Traffic Enforcement Pickup Truck Equipment: - Portable Scales - Aerial Drone - Pickup Truck Shell/Toolbox	Commercial Truck Enforcement & Traffic Safety	\$ 31,000.00
<b>Santa Paula PD</b>	Incident Response Vehicle: - Contractor Van - Traffic Control Equipment - Investigation Equipment	Incident Response Time / Investigation Time / Traffic Control	\$ 85,000.00



# IRGP Summary

## Incident Responder Grant Program Rounds 1-3 Awards

Entity	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	TOTAL
Camarillo PD	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000
CHP	\$ -	\$ 259,000	\$ -	\$ 259,000
Fillmore FD	\$ 45,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 45,000
Oxnard FD	\$ -	\$ 317,000	\$ 117,000	\$ 434,000
Oxnard PD	\$ 50,000	\$ 148,000	\$ 122,852	\$ 320,852
Port Hueneme PD	\$ -	\$ 18,000	\$ 31,000	\$ 49,000
Santa Paula PD	\$ -	\$ 119,000	\$ 85,000	\$ 204,000
Ventura County Fire District	\$ 55,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 55,000
Ventura County Sheriffs Office	\$ 318,000	\$ 139,000	\$ -	\$ 457,000
Ventura PD	\$ 437,519	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 437,519
TOTAL	\$ 905,519	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 855,852	\$ 2,761,371

Status	Total
Active	\$ 855,852
Extension	\$ 119,000
Closed Out	\$ 1,527,519
Returned	\$ 259,000





# Questions?

## VCTC Staff

Amanda Fagan, Director of Planning & Sustainability,  
[afagan@goventura.org](mailto:afagan@goventura.org)

Drew Kent, GIS/Planning Analyst,  
[akent@goventura.org](mailto:akent@goventura.org)

## FSP Contractor

Bill Paymard, Platinum Tow

## California Highway Patrol

Lieutenant Key, Officer Wren







## Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies

# Highway Emergency Call Box Program Discussion

*Receive a report and provide direction to staff on the  
Emergency Roadside Call box system.*







## Call Boxes – Overview

- The call box system is comprised of 428 emergency roadside call boxes which provide a direct link to the California Highway Patrol.
- In 2017, 142 of the least used and most frequently knocked-down call boxes were removed from service.
- In 2022, the system was upgraded to be compatible with 4G.
- The cost to operate and maintain the call box system for a typical year ranges between \$350,000 and \$400,000
  - Avg. annual cost is ~\$875 per unit
  - Cost varies based on number of knockdowns, temporary construction removals and replacements
- With the proliferation of cell phones, SAFE agencies are reevaluating the benefit-cost of maintaining call box systems.





# Call Boxes – Countywide System



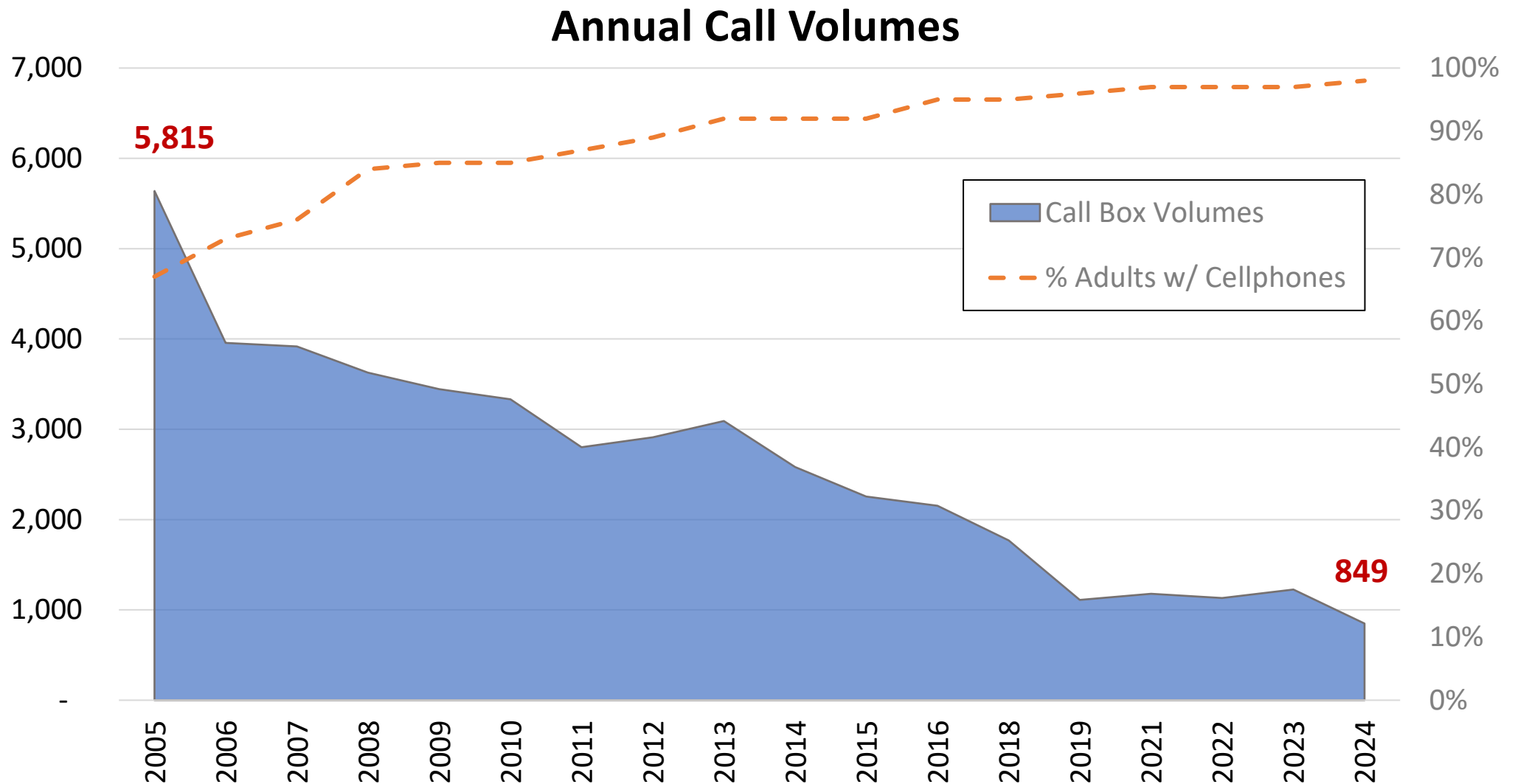
## VC SAFE Maintains 428 Call Boxes

- Direct Connection to CHP Dispatch
- Spaced 0.5 to 1 Mile
- AT&T 4G Cellular Service
- ADA Text to Talk Capability





# Call Boxes – Call Volumes





# Call Boxes – Annual Calls per Box 5 Yr. Average by Highway

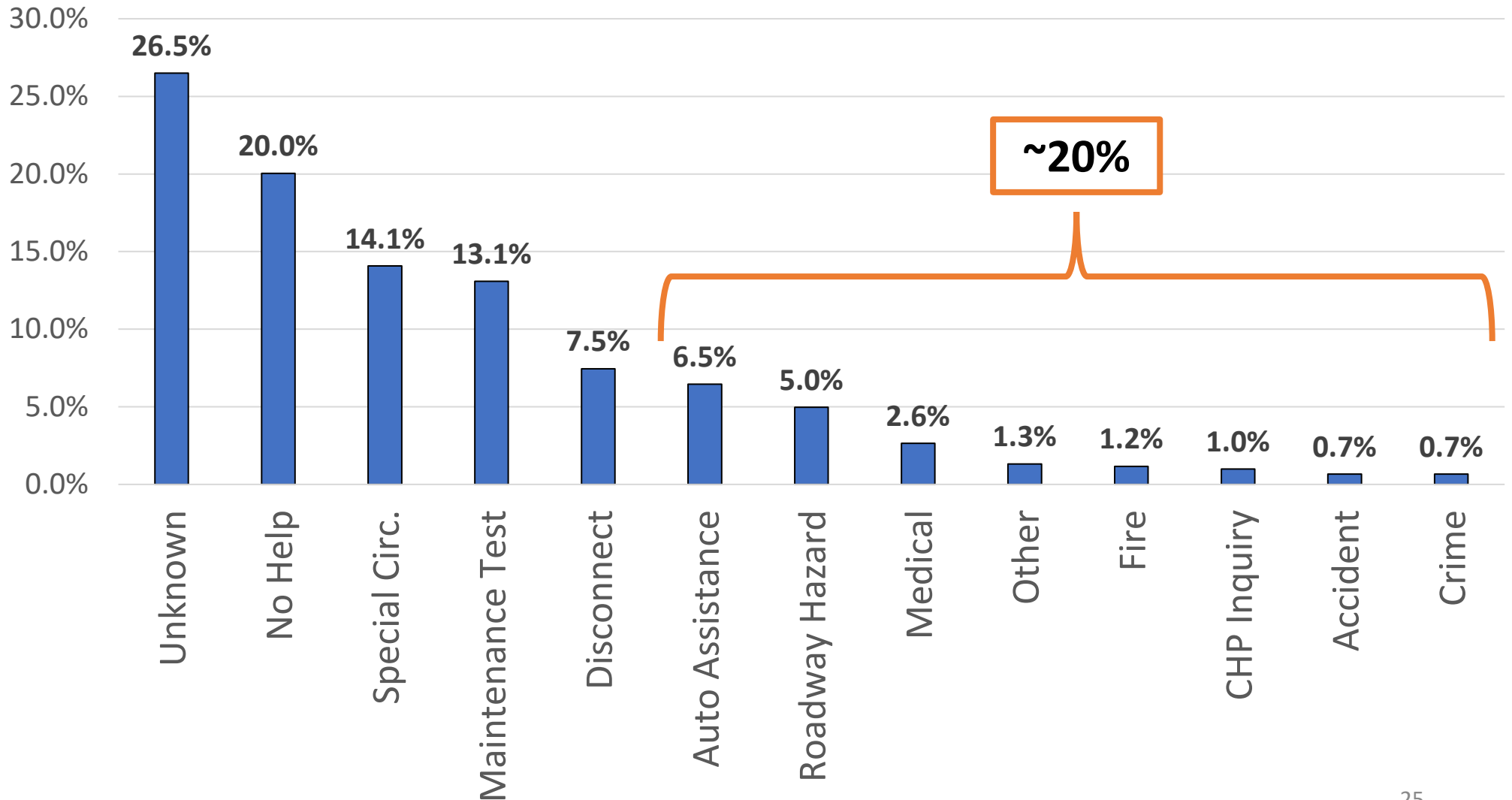
HIGHWAY	Calls / call box / year	Percent of Call boxes
HWY 001	4.77	10%
HWY 150	3.47	5%
HWY 101	2.76	30%
HWY 034	2.40	1%
HWY 118	2.29	15%
HWY 033	2.08	6%
HWY 023	1.63	10%
HWY 126	1.45	24%





# Call Boxes - Calls for Assistance

Capitol Valley Regional Safe 2024 - Call Type





## Call Boxes – Knightscope Acquisition

- In June 2020, VCTC approved a three-year maintenance contract with a two-year option with CASE Emergency Systems.
- In February 2023, CASE Emergency Systems was acquired by Knightscope, Inc.
  - Call Box Maintenance Contracts Statewide
  - Patent for the proprietary call box technology
- In June 2023, VCTC exercised the option to extend the contract for call box maintenance services through June 30, 2025.
- Maintenance contractor is compensated a monthly flat fee of \$40.81 per active call box to provide:
  - **Preventative Maintenance:** Two (2) annual maintenance visits to clean boxes and service hardware.
  - **Corrective Maintenance:** Service technician is dispatched when daily test call fails or call box sensors trigger automated alert.





# Call Boxes – Preventative Maintenance

- In December 2023, Knightscope Management Unilaterally Suspended Semi-Annual Preventative Maintenance Inspections.
- In March 2024, Staff was Informed the County's Dedicated Maintenance Technician Position had Been Eliminated.
- Knightscope Management's Communication to Staff:
  - Call Box Contracts Acquired from CASE Sys. Are a Loss Center for the Company.
  - SAFE's Will Need to Accept Reductions in Maintenance Visits and/or Contract Rate Increases.
  - If Knightscope Doesn't Profit from Contracts, Management Will Shutter the Call Box Division.
  - Claims Future Deployment of Smart System Will Reduce Need for Preventative Maintenance Visits.





## Call Boxes – Aging Technology

- Call Boxes Hardware Relies on Original First-Gen Components.
- SAFEs are Concerned that Knightscope Will Not be Able to Source the Parts to Maintain the Hardware in the Long-Run.
- Knightscope Has Not Presented the SAFEs with Plans to Upgrade the Call Box Technology.
- **T-CUBED Consultant - Call Box Alternatives Memo:**
  - *No highway call boxes, other than the current Knightscope K1, meet all the requirements of the CHP/Caltrans Call Box and Motorist Aid Guidelines.*
  - *No new technologies for accessing roadside assistance were found in the literature.*





# Call Boxes – Statewide Context

## Capitol Valley Regional SAFE

- Received Contract Discussion Request Letter from Knightscope with a 400% Proposed Cost Increase.

## Santa Barbara County SAFE

- Reduced Program to a few Boxes in Rural Areas with Poor Cell Coverage.

## San Bernadino County SAFE

- Terminated Contract with Knightscope Inc. for Cause
- Issued RFP to Remove All Call Boxes & Sunset Program.

## San Diego County SAFE

- Created In-House Call Box Maintenance Position.
- Ongoing Effort to Identify Alternative Call Box Technology.

## Caltrans SAFE Liaison

- **Expressed Professional Judgement to the 2024 *Statewide Motorist Aid Committee* that the Costs of Call Boxes Now Exceed Benefits to Motorists**



## Call Boxes - Option 1: Maintain Existing Service Levels

- To Maintain Existing Service Levels, the Contract for Call Box Maintenance Services Will Need to Be Procured by June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025.
- Due to the Lack of a Competitive Market for Call Box Maintenance Services, VC SAFE Would Likely Have to Accept:
  - No Dedicated Service Technician
  - Reduced Response Times for Corrective Maintenance
  - No Preventative Maintenance
  - Significant Rate Increase





## Call Boxes - Option 2: Right-Size / System Reduction

- SAFE's Can Remove Up to 25% of Existing Call Boxes without Review from Caltrans.
- Task T-Cubed Call Box Analytics Consultant With Preparing a System Reduction Recommendation for SAFE Board Approval.
- System Right-Sizing Factors Considered:
  - Low Call Volume Boxes
  - High Knockdown Potential
  - Cellular Coverage
  - Urban/Rural Areas
- Procure Call Box Maintenance Services Contractor by June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025 to Maintain Reduced System.
- Cost Savings are Uncertain Since Call Box Reductions Will Likely Be Offset by Higher Contract Rate per Unit.



## Call Boxes - Option 3: Sunset the Call Box Program

- Prepare System Removal Plan for Caltrans Review to Sunset the Program & Procure Contractor Services to Remove Call Boxes
- Reallocate \$375,000 Annual Maintenance Budget to Alternative Motorist Aid Programs
- Optional: Implement 511 Mobile Call Box Signage





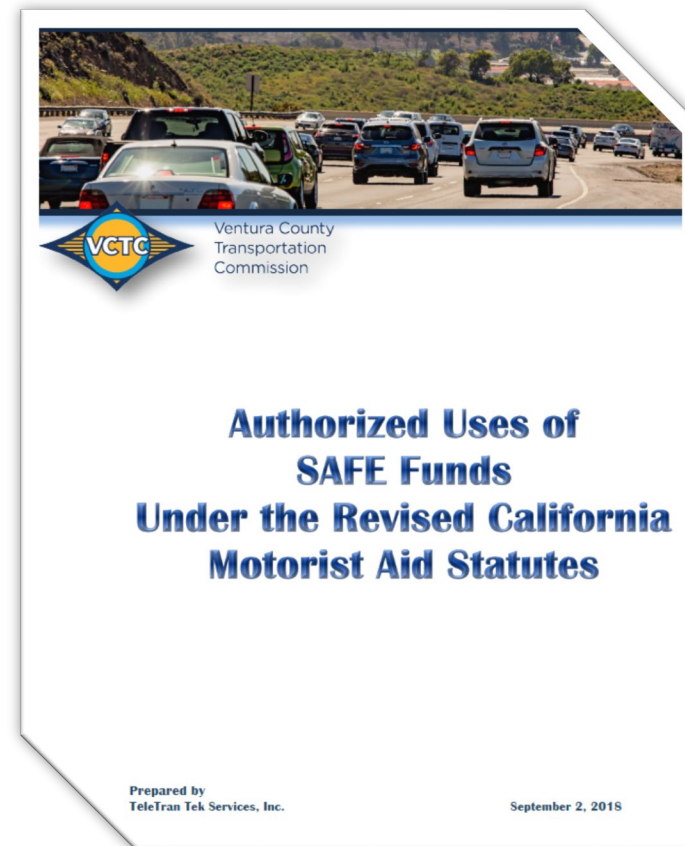


# Call Boxes – Alternative Uses of Motorist Aid Funds

In Addition to Freeway Service Patrols  
& Incident Responder Grants ...

SAFE Agencies Have Used Motorist Aid  
Revenues to Fund:

- Extra CHP Patrols / Officers
- Intelligent Transp. Systems (ITS)
- Transp. Demand Management (TDM)
- Innovation Grants
  - Micro-Transit Programs
- Roadway Hazard/Obstruction Removal
- Call 511 / Mobile Call Box Signage





## Call Boxes – SAFE Board Guidance

### **Staff is seeking guidance from the SAFE Board**

#### VC SAFE Options for Future of Call Box Program:

1. Maintain Existing Service Levels
2. Phase Out Call Boxes Through Incremental Reductions or “Right-Sizing”
3. Submit System Removal Plan to Caltrans to Sunset the Ventura County Call Box Program

Staff will return with an item at an upcoming Commission meeting reflecting the SAFE Board’s preferences for final approval.







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