

Recent Wildfire Prevention/Preparedness Legislative Bills

2021

AB 9 (Wood) Fire safety and prevention: wildfires: fire adapted communities: Office of the State Fire Marshal: community wildfire preparedness and mitigation.

- Establishes the OSFM Community Wildfire Preparedness & Mitigation Division
- Establishes a State Fire Marshal's Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Committee
- Replaces the Director with the State Fire Marshal in multiple fire prevention related codes.
- Requires report back to the Legislature on fire prevention needs
- Establishes the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program at the Department of Conservation

AB 642 (Friedman) Wildfires.

- Requires moderate and high fire hazard severity zones in LRA
- Add cultural burning liaison to State Board of Fire Services
- Develop a proposal to establish a prescribed fire training center
- Make recommendations on community wildfire risk model
- Enhance public education efforts regarding prescribed and cultural burning
- Develop automated system for issuing burn permits

SB 63 (Stern) Fire prevention: vegetation management: public education: grants: defensible space: fire hazard severity zones: forest management.

- Requires moderate and high fire hazard severity zones in LRA
- Creates Defensible Space/Home Hardening Assessment Program
- Allows Defensible Space beyond the property line if required by law or ordinance
 - Requires update to model defensible space program
- Expands Chapter 7A into high fire hazard severity zones and to consider moderate FHSZ.
- Requires report to Legislature on outcomes of completed fire prevention projects
- Increase Fire Prevention Grant Program advances up to 50% for equipment purchases

SB 456 (Laird) Fire prevention: wildfire and forest resilience: action plan: reports.

- Implementation strategy for Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force Action Plan
- Requires implementation of specified actions
- Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program at the Department of Conservation
- Authorizes utility wildfire mitigation plans to include the use of fire-retardant chemicals approved by the State Fire Marshal
- The council to identify and coordinate the implementation of fire prevention programs

2020

AB 3074 (Friedman) Fire prevention: wildfire risk: defensible space: ember-resistant zones

- Creates an ember-resistant zone in the first five feet around habitable structures in the SRA and VHFHSZ in the LRA.
- Fuels Management Guidance - Requires the guidance document to include suggestions for creating an ember-resistant zone by January 1, 2023.
- LRA VHFHSZ - Adds language to the Government Code 51182 pertaining to fuels management guidance document updates for VHFHSZs that was previously adopted in the Public Resources Code) per AB 2911.
- Notification - Requires CAL FIRE or local agencies having jurisdiction, to make reasonable efforts to notify residents of the zero to five-foot zone.

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2019

AB 38 (Wood) Fire safety: low-cost retrofits: regional capacity review: wildfire mitigation

- Establishment of Wildfire Mitigation Financial Assistance Program - With OES, develop and administer a JPA with CAL FIRE to administer a comprehensive wildfire mitigation program to retrofit homes within vulnerable populations.
- Real Estate Disclosure – On or after January 1, 2021, requires the seller of a home in a High or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone to provide documentation of home hardening improvements made to the home and defensible space compliance.
- Regional Fire Prevention Capacity Review – Identify and review the regional fire prevention capacity in all counties containing VHFHSZ to improve forest health, fire resilience, and safety.

SB 190 (Dodd) Fire safety: building standards: defensible space program

- Model Defensible Space Program - OSFM to consult with stakeholders to develop a model defensible space program for use by local entities.
- WUI Fire Safety Building Standards Compliance Training - Develop training for local building officials, builders, and fire service personnel on WUI codes and standards, and make it available on our internet website.
- WUI Products Listing – Requires the OSFM to develop and maintain a WUI products and construction assemblies handbook that is compliant with CBC Chapter 7A.

2018

SB 901 (Dodd) Wildfire Package

- Utility Wildfire Mitigation Plans (WMP):
 - Expanded the responsibility of CAL FIRE to work with the CPUC in the review process of the WMPs submitted by the Investor-Owned Utilities.
- \$200 million a year from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund for the next five years (through FY 23/24) for forest health, fire prevention, and fuel reduction.
- Exemptions for fuel reduction and forest management projects.
- Requires the Board to adopt fire safe development regulations for the LRA VH FHSZ.

AB 2911 (Friedman) Fire safety

- Low-cost retrofit list - Develop a list of low-cost retrofit items.
- Fire resistant plant list - Create guidance document on fuel management will limit “native species” to only include those that are fire resistant and drought tolerant.
- Update OPR’s “Fire Hazard Planning, General Plan Technical Advice Series” by July 1, 2020.
- Requires new levels of interaction between local jurisdictions and the Board of Forestry as they relate to development of General Plan Safety Elements.
- Subdivision Review Program - The Board of Forestry and OSFM will identify subdivisions with more than 30 dwelling units and without a secondary egress route in the SRA and LRA VHFHSZs, develop recommendations to improve the subdivision’s fire safety, and follow up on implementation of those recommendations.

AB 1956 (Limon) Fire prevention activities: local assistance grant program

- Authorized CAL FIRE to make advanced payments on grants (up to 25%).
- Requires CAL FIRE to have a public workshop by January 31, 2022, to review activities funded by the program.