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## **CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE MITIGATION PROGRAM BOARD MEETING**

### **Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, May 16, 2023**

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#### **Board Members Present**

Daniel Berlant, Board Vice-Chair, Deputy Director of Community Wildfire Preparedness & Mitigation, CAL FIRE

Frank Bigelow, Board Member, Assistant Deputy Director, Community Wildfire Preparedness & Mitigation and Fire Engineering & Investigations, CAL FIRE

Abby Browning, Board Member, Chief, Private Sector & NGO Coordination, Cal OES

#### **Cal OES Staff Present**

J. Lopez, Executive Director, CWMP

Jordon Boyer, SSM I, CWMP

Matthew Delgado, AGPA, CWMP

Sarah Glenn, AGPA, CWMP

Ron Miller, Division Chief, Hazard Mitigation

Lisa Long, SSM I, Hazard Mitigation

David Neill, Assistant Chief Counsel

Brian Doss, AGPA, Hazard Mitigation

Cole Finup, AGPA, Hazard Mitigation

Angelica Quezada, AGPA, Hazard Mitigation

Scott Gowin, SSM I, Hazard Mitigation (*Virtual*)

Makeda Johnson, AGPA, Recovery (*Virtual*)

Liston Conrad, Consultant (*Virtual*)

Lisa Rice, Consultant (*Virtual*)

#### **CAL FIRE Staff Present**

Steve Hawks, Assistant Deputy Director

John Morgan, Deputy Chief

Dennis O'Neil, Assistant Chief

Kara Garrett, AGPA

Will Brewer, GIS Analyst

Ross Dollarhide, Captain (*Virtual*)

**I. CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME – 10:00 AM**

- a. The meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM; welcome remarks provided by Vice-Chair D. Berlant.
  - Vice-Chair D. Berlant welcomed the newest CWMP Board Member Abby Browning. Abby Browning provided a brief personal introduction and formally accepted her appointment as a CWMP Board Member.

**II. ROLL CALL/QUORUM ESTABLISHED**

- a. Roll call and quorum established with three Board Members present and one Board Member absent.
  - R. Troy – Absent
  - D. Berlant – Present
  - F. Bigelow – Present
  - A. Browning – Present

**III. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES**

- a. Review and approval of Meeting Minutes from April 18, 2023. No comments received.

**Motion:** F. Bigelow moved to approve Meeting Minutes from April 18, 2023.

A. Browning seconded the motion.

**Action:** All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

- a. No public comments received.

**V. OLD BUSINESS**

- a. Home Hardening Pilot Program – Monthly Status Report (*Informational Only*)
  - Division Chief Ron Miller and Assistant Chief Dennis O’Neil provided an update on the Home Hardening Pilot Program and the status of projects within the CWMP Demonstration Communities. Ron Miller also provided an update on the CWMP Budget.
    - i. Pending Issues Requiring Program Guidance –
      - 1. Updating site work documents to incorporate Minimum Quality Standards (MQS).
        - a. The updates will impact Requests for Quotes (RFQ), Master Agreement and Site-Specific Quote Packages. These updates will improve clarity for contractors and homeowners

- b. Technical Assistance (TA) is being provided to help incorporate these changes into the local documents.
    - c. Next steps after updates – local legal review of Master Agreement.
  - 2. Adopting Zone 0 impacts on FEMA Award – Scope of Work (SOW) Modification for FEMA Sub application and site work.
  - 3. Pending further review, parcels currently listed on the ‘No-Issue Property’ list may be moved to the ‘Issue Property’ list
  - 4. Working to finalize Self-Attestation Form.
    - a. This form is only a temporary measure until the online form is updated
- ii. San Diego County –
  - 1. San Diego County SME provided response to EHP RFI (Request for Information) #2, pending a response from FEMA.
  - 2. Nine home assessments completed using the newest version of the app and have been marked final through Quality Assurance (QA).
  - 3. One SOW is in final stages and one SOW still undergoing QA.
  - 4. Published RFQ for home hardening contractors, four responses received thus far. San Diego has already compiled a list of qualified defensible space contractors.
- iii. Shasta County –
  - 1. Response to FEMA for RFI #2 was submitted on May 15, 2023.
  - 2. Seven home assessments completed using the newest version of the app and have been marked final through QA.
  - 3. Two SOWs ready for final QA.
  - 4. Finalizing Contractor RFQ for publishing.
- iv. Lake County (North Coast Opportunities) –
  - 1. Awarded by FEMA in March 2023.
  - 2. Two assessments that have gone through QA need a minor update to finalize.
  - 3. Continuing to onboard and train new staff.
  - 4. Received virtual CAL FIRE training on Defensible Space and Home Hardening.
  - 5. In-person Home Assessment training scheduled for May 25, 2023.
  - 6. Contractor RFQ closing soon.
- v. El Dorado County and Tuolumne Counties –
  - 1. Pending FEMA approval.

b. Update on Outreach to Potential New Demonstration Communities (*Informational Only*)

- i. Siskiyou County (Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District)  
Submitted a sub application to Cal OES, sub application currently in the award process.
  1. Total Project Cost: \$3,598,000.
  2. Siskiyou County project will be the first state funded only CWMP Demonstration Community. Project will include implementing Defensible Space measures (Zone 0, 1, & 2) for approximately 100 parcels.
- ii. CWMP Budget –
  1. SB 85 Allocation Split into two funding years
    - a. The funding includes the 25% matching funds for San Diego and Shasta Counties, 10% matching funds for Lake County.
    - b. The funds allocate 5% of the total funding to administration costs.
    - c. These funds must be liquidated by June 30, 2024.
    - d. Staff suggested advancing funds to counties to ensure that the funds are liquidated before the deadline. may be necessary.
  2. Encumbering \$13.9M
    - a. 15% match for San Diego and Shasta.
    - b. Match for Tuolumne and El Dorado.
    - c. Funds will cover 100% project cost for Siskiyou.
    - d. Must be liquidated by June 30, 2025.
    - e. Advances may be necessary if Budget Change Proposal (BCP) is not approved to extend liquidation deadline
  3. AB 179 – Ch. 249 (SFY 22/23) Allocation - \$13,000,000
    - a. Program Costs – \$12,350,000
    - b. Admin Costs – \$650,000
    - c. These funds must encumber by June 30, 2027.
- iii. CAL FIRE Update –
  1. Recently completed the classroom portion of our CWMP hybrid Defensible Space/Home Ignition Zone training for Lake County and CWMP Staff.
  2. Completed the CWMP Zone 0 Minimum Quality Standard.
  3. Updating the Home Hardening Assessment App to include 'Zone 0' criteria.
  4. Initiated a Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Fire Safety Building Standards Compliance Training Working Group

## VI. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Update on Potential Tax Implications for Property Owners (*Informational Only*)
  - i. California's definition of gross income conforms to the federal definition of gross income in the Internal Revenue Code.
  - ii. While the IRS excludes FEMA mitigation funding from income, state funding is not clearly excluded, and additional clarification is being sought.
  - iii. There are at least five bills pending at the federal level to exempt this funding from state taxation.
  - iv. Vice-Chair Berlant raised the need to consider the potential effects on other benefits received by property owners if this funding is considered income.
  - v. CWMP staff to work with counsel to review and identify potential options.
- b. Staff Recommendations and Next Steps for the Home Hardening Demonstration Community Pilot Program (*Informational Only*)
  - i. J. Lopez provided Board Members with information on potential changes to future CWMP Board Meeting Agenda and CWMP media outreach efforts.
  - ii. J. Lopez discussed structures with unpermitted improvements.
    1. Communities will need to work with local building officials to provide information on home with unpermitted improvements.
    2. CWMP will need to consider cost of bringing unpermitted components up to code.
    3. Ron Miller stated that FEMA guidance allows for home retrofit, but not home rehabilitation.
    4. Board Member Frank Bigelow stated that unpermitted structures would not be considered covered by insurance in a total loss.
    5. Lisa Long stated that San Diego County was concerned about the fact that San Diego has several unpermitted structures.
    6. Vice-Chair Berlant stated the important of finding balance between FEMA guidance, legal requirements, and home protection regardless of permit status.
  - iii. Meeting Agenda Format –
    1. J. Lopez inquired whether the public comment section should be added after each section on the agenda
      - a. Vice-Chair Berlant stated the public comment section in the beginning and end of the meeting agenda is intended for items not on the agenda.
      - b. Vice-Chair Berlant stated that open dialogue at the end of each agenda item is encouraged.
  - iv. Media Outreach –
    1. CWMP staff to coordinate with CAL FIRE and Cal OES Public Information Officers to develop a Media Outreach policy for the CWMP.

## VII. FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULE

- a. Third Tuesday of each month starting at 10:00 AM and ending at 12:00 PM.
- b. Next CWMP Board Meeting will take place on June 20, 2023.
  - Board Meeting will be held at the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) Building, Second Floor, Conference Room 2-221 located at 715 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814.

## VIII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

- a. A. Browning discussed the importance of conducting media outreach. CWMP staff to continue coordinating with Cal OES and CAL FIRE PIO.
- b. D. Berlant mentioned the impending fire season and reiterated the importance of the CWMP.

**Motion:** F. Bigelow moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:22 AM.

A. Browning seconded the motion.

**Action:** All in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

## IX. MEETING ADJOURNMENT – 11:22 AM