
GENERAL FIREWORKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES – APRIL 21, 2026, 1:30PM-4:30PM

Hybrid Committee Meeting



Meeting Location:

Office of the State Fire Marshal
California Natural Resources Building 2nd Floor
Conference Room 02-201
715 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814

1. CALL TO ORDER

A. Welcome and Introductions

Co-Chairperson Deputy Caleb Phillips opened the meeting with a logistics briefing and stated that the committee meeting would be conducted in compliance with the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act. He requested that attendees keep their cameras on, when possible, mute microphones when not speaking to avoid audio interference, and state their name prior to speaking for the record. Phillips also informed members of the public that there would be an opportunity for public comments, with remarks limited to three minutes. Additionally, he provided emergency instructions for in-person attendees.

B. Roll Call/Determine Quorum

Members Present:

Chairperson Brice Bennett, CAL FIRE Division Chief
Co-Chairperson Caleb Phillips, CAL FIRE Deputy State Fire Marshal III (Specialist)
Janice Van Mullem, Huntington Beach Fire Department
Mark Holthaus, Friends of Amateur Rocketry
Ian Gilfillan, Pyro-Spectaculars-North
Amy Nygren, Sacramento Metro Fire District
Gary Brown, Pyro-Spectaculars
Julie Heckman, American Pyrotechnic Association
Alan (Bruce) Turner, Independent Pyrotechnic Operator
Linda Hass-Kreman, Phantom Fireworks
Dennis Revell, Revell Communications
Tad Trout, TNT Fireworks
Logan Herrera, Lander Challenge

Members Absent:

Frank Muccio, Reaction Research Society
Antonio Solares, Orange County Fire Authority

Office of State Fire Marshal (Office of State Fire Marshal) Staff:

Chief Andrew Henning, Assistant Deputy Director
Chief Jeff Schwartz, Deputy State Fire Marshal III (Supervisor)

Al Adams, Office of State Fire Marshal (Retired Annuitant)
Ramiro Rodriguez, Office of State Fire Marshal (Retired Annuitant)
Vijay Mepani, Deputy State Fire Marshal III (Specialist)
Larry Godbout, Supervisor I
Cortney Walker, Supervisor I
Kemiko Tolon, Analyst II
Christopher Dale, Analyst II
Thomas Setnan, Analyst II
Jamie Sammut, Attorney, Office of the State Fire Marshal

Public Guests:

Aaron Crawford, TNT Fireworks
Brice Chanes, Tripoli Rocketry Association Director
Steve Guerrero, Stockton Fire Department
James Klein, Fire Marshal, Stockton Fire Department
Eric Elias, Member of the Public
James Eadie, Pyrotechnic Operator

2. OLD BUSINESS

A. Approval of Past Meeting Minutes – January 27, 2026

Co-Chairperson Caleb Phillips requested approval of the meeting minutes from January 27, 2026. The committee then discussed approval of the January 27th meeting minutes, with two corrections noted: Amy Nygren's attendance status was corrected, and Dennis Rebell's suggestion to insert "force" in the title after "task" in section 2C was incorporated. Committee member Dennis Revell also asked to add a section about a potential California-Nevada illegal fireworks task force discussion with the new Nevada State Fire Marshal, Joe Rodriguez. A motion was made by Ian Gillifian and seconded by Julie Heckman to approve the corrected meeting minutes.

B. Announcements and Division Updates

Chief Bennett thanked the committee members for their continued participation in the advisory committee. Chief Henning reported that the agency is preparing for the 4th of July holiday by clearing current fireworks stockpiles to make room for expected increased activity. Division Supervisor I Larry Godbout announced the rollout of an enhancement from Govmotus on April 30, 2026 involving bulk payment processing. Further details will be sent out soon on how to process. Chief Bennett made clear this is an enhancement that will be valuable to all programs for those companies that make payments on behalf of their employees.

C. FIREWORKS REGULATIONS UPDATE

Chairperson Chief Bennett announced that the fireworks regulations update has been moved from the committee to the Division Chief level for review, with plans for regular updates every 3-5 years following initial catch-up. After review from the DC, the package will move to Executive, Legal and Code Development. With the inclusion of new practices that come from prevention and enforcement and best practices from industry will be included in the regular updates.

D. PUBLIC SAFETY FIREWORKS ENFORCEMENT TASKFORCE UPDATE

Chief Bennett recommended a new proposal to facilitate industry creating their own recommendations report instead of including an Appendix A in the Enforcement Task Force update, with interested parties asked to email FWX at fire.ca.gov with a letter of interest to participate in this process. The goal is to have the recommendations complete before the next advisory meeting. Member Gilfillan asked about implementation of the contents of the report, and is there an opportunity for the industry to get together and discuss before implementing? Chief Bennett states there is no timeline for implementation as some require funding, statutory change, etc. Chief Bennett confirmed that industry members would have opportunities to provide input and comments before implementation of the recommendations. Member Janice Van Mullem and Gary Brown raised concerns about the report's focus, suggesting it lacked balance between enforcement and industry perspectives, not addressing the root cause, which is supply and demand. Bennett confirmed the focus of the group was public safety. Member Tad Troutt questioned the process for evaluating and implementing the recommendations, expressing concerns about feasibility and practicality of some suggestions. He also expressed concern about the timeline and how long it will take to implement. Chief Bennett acknowledged the feedback and indicated that comments would be considered as the conversation continues to evolve. Chief Henning clarified that the regulations package is undergoing final review before moving to CAL FIRE's legal team, with a more realistic timeline of approximately 18 months for completion due to the rulemaking process and potential public comment periods. Member Gary Brown suggested exploring a more parallel review process to potentially expedite the preliminary stages, which Chief Bennett agreed to consider.

3. NEW BUSINESS

A. UPLOADING OF PHOTOGRAPHS FOR DEVICE CLASSIFICATION APPLICATIONS

Change of business process for device classification application for the company to upload a photo of the product showing the seal and tubes. It will streamline the application and approval process. It will be effective by the next round of testing.

B. ROCKETRY WORKGROUP RESULTS

James Eadie presented a proposal to the Rockets Workgroup to formally recognize national rocket motor certifications from organizations like the National Association of Rocketry for California classification. The workgroup agreed that codifying the acceptance of national test data was appropriate, as this process is already being used in practice. James noted that while the initial draft language named specific certification organizations, the final regulatory language could potentially reference performance-based standards like NFPA 1125 instead. He also shared a compiled list of certified rocket motors from North American organizations that could serve as a reference for approved hobby use motors. Mark Holthos then raised concerns about high licensing costs for rocket motor manufacturers in California, noting that only two companies (Estes and Aerotech) currently have fire marshal stickers, both of which are based out of state. He suggested reducing licensing fees or simplifying the licensing process to encourage more local manufacturers.

Chief Bennett discussed a proposal to modify regulations to accept the National Association of Rocketry's certification standards for model rocket motors. James explained that the current process relies on third-party test reports, and the proposed

change would streamline this by explicitly allowing NAR-certified motors. Member Herrera asked for clarification regarding the process of regulation package and if this new recommendation would be impacted by the current regulation package in process. Chief Schwartz explained the process of priority, and Chief Bennett explained the entire regulations package process from start to finish. After discussion about the efficiency benefits of the proposal, the committee voted to support it. Member Logan Herrera made motion to create new rockets workgroup increasing more access to vendors. Member Dennis Revell seconded. Motion passed. Chief Bennett suggested if there are any additional interested parties to send an email to fwx@fire.ca.gov.

C. IMPORT/EXPORT NOTIFICATION TRACKING

Member Dennis Revell raised concerns about import-export notification tracking. He suggested the department subscribe to a service like Import Genius to monitor imports more effectively. Chief Brice Bennett agreed to meet with him to explore port monitoring software options.

D. LICENSE RENEWAL LETTER UPDATE

Member Dennis Revell, inquired about the license renewal letter explaining import/export renewal process. Chief Bennett confirmed the letter would be complete and sent out within the week.

4. OPEN FORUM

Member Herrera expressed appreciation for the Office of State Fire Marshal in discussing the educational and community engagement materials for the rocketry industry. He offered his continued assistance. Member Holthaus also expressed his willingness to assist with the educational materials for rocketry. He also asked Deputy Phillips to clarify who will create the questions for the exam. Phillips explained there is a third-party who will develop the questions which will include input from the subject matter experts to participate. Member Revell also asked for clarification regarding the Appendix A in the Enforcement Task Force report. Chief Bennett explained the final decision will be made by the State Fire Marshal.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

James Eadie expressed appreciation for presenting his report to the committee. Chief Bennett encouraged continue safety and protocol as we move into America 250, 4th of July.

6. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

July 21, 2026 at 1:30 PM-4:30 PM
Office of the State Fire Marshal
3780 Killroy Airport Way, 5th Floor (Room 512)
Long Beach, CA 90806

7. MEETING ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Member Amy Nygren to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Member Ian Gilfillan; all in favor of adjournment. Co-Chairperson Caleb Phillips adjourned the meeting at 2:59 P.M. PST