
WILDFIRE MITIGATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, August 19, 2025



Committee Members Present

Daniel Berlant, CAL FIRE, Office of the State Fire Marshal
Bob Counts, CAL FIRE
Brian Newman Lindsay, Department of Conservation
Ken DaRosa, Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety
J. Lopez, State Board of Forestry & Fire Protection *
Robert Troy, Office of Emergency Services
Michael McGuire, Office of Land Use & Climate Innovation
Jacy Hyde, California Fire Safe Council
Laura Blaul, Insurance Industry (virtual)
Bill Villarino, Santa Barbara County Fire (virtual)
Christopher Ochoa, California Building Industry Association
Clay Kerchof, Department of Housing & Community Development (virtual)
Staci Heaton, Rural County Representatives of California
Sophia Lemmo, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (virtual)
Sean McGlynn, League of California Cities
Catherine Freeman, California State Association of Counties
Don Hankins, Tribal Government Representative (virtual)
Lisa Lien-Mager, California Natural Resources Agency

Members Absent

Lenya Quinn-Davidson, University of California Cooperative
Yana Valachovic, California Fire Science Consortium
Deborah Halberstadt, Insurance Commissioner's Office

CAL FIRE Staff in Attendance

Frank Bigelow, Deputy Director
Andrew Henning, Assistant Deputy Director
Jim McDougald, Assistant Deputy Director
Matt Damon, Staff Chief
Emily Smith, Staff Chief
John Morgan, Staff Chief
Shane Vargas, Deputy Chief
Randy Northup, Assistant Chief
Gene Potkey, Assistant Chief (virtual)
Jamie Sammut, Senior Staff Counsel
Kyle O'Neil, Battalion Chief
Kara Garrett, Deputy State Fire Marshal III
Jillian Fisher, Staff Services Manager I
Carrie Lewis, Associate Governmental Program Analyst
Justine Grafton, Associate Governmental Program Analyst
Danh Dao, Staff Services Analyst

* partial meeting attendance

1. CALL TO ORDER 1:02 PM

Daniel Berlant

A. Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 1:02 PM by Daniel Berlant.

B. Roll Call – Carrie Lewis

A quorum was established with 12 committee members present in-person and five attending virtually.

C. Approval of the July 15, 2025, Meeting Minutes (Motion Required) – Daniel Berlant

Motion: Jacy Hyde moved to accept the July 15, 2025, meeting minutes; Christopher Ochoa seconded the motion.

Action: All members voted unanimously to approve the motion.

D. Approval of the August 19, 2025, Agenda (Motion Required) – Daniel Berlant

Brian Newman-Lindsay requested that it be noted that the Department of Conservation Member Organizational Overview will be on the September agenda.

Motion: Catherine Freeman moved to accept the August 19, 2025, meeting agenda; Brian Newman-Lindsay seconded the motion.

Action: All members voted unanimously to approve the motion.

2. UPDATES

A. Division Report

i. Wildfire Preparedness

1. Defensible Space

1) Statewide SRA total for fiscal year-to-date 2025-26:

i. 32,387 inspections, 13% of the goal (250,000)

ii. Qualified Entity assessment year-to-date total:

o 1,267 assessments

o August training classes are at the following CAL FIRE units:

- Tehama – Glenn: August 19-20
- Shasta – Trinity: August 22-23
- Amador – El Dorado: August 25-26

2. Burn Permits

1) 2025 year-to-date total: 57,855

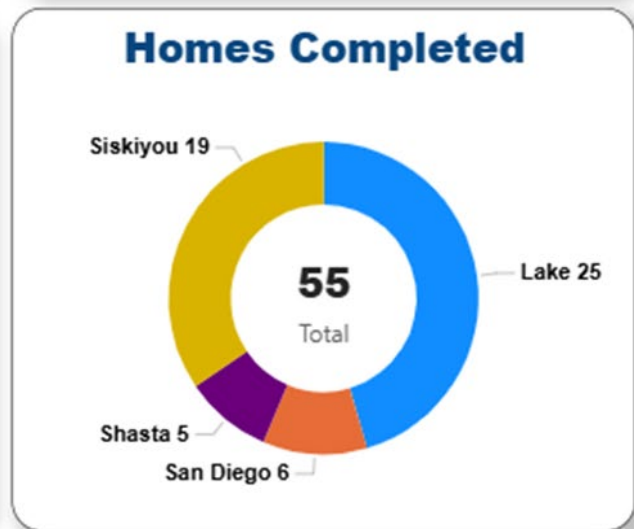
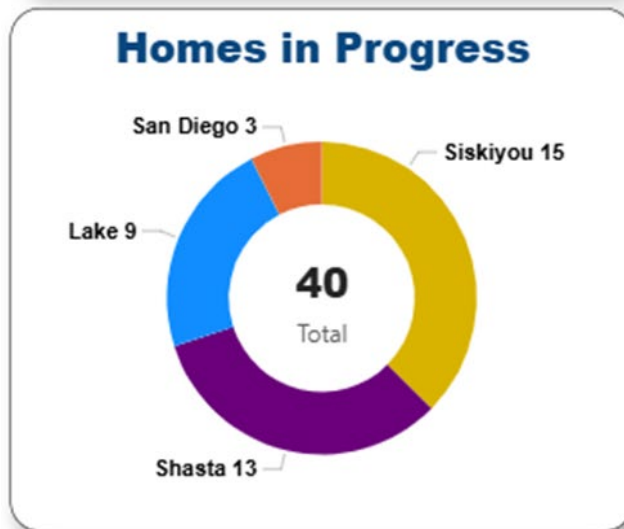
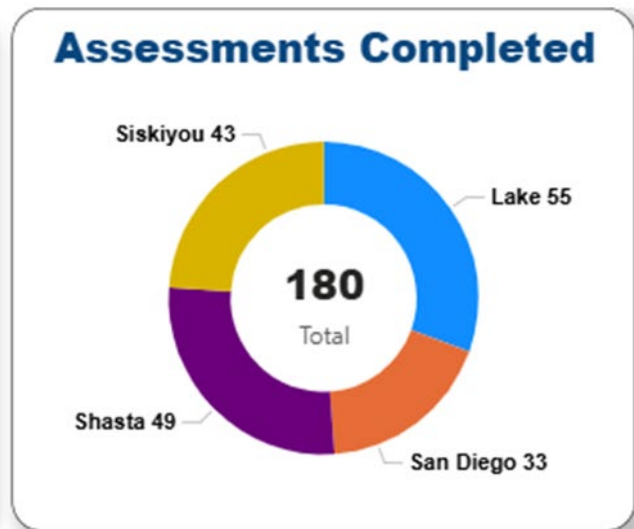
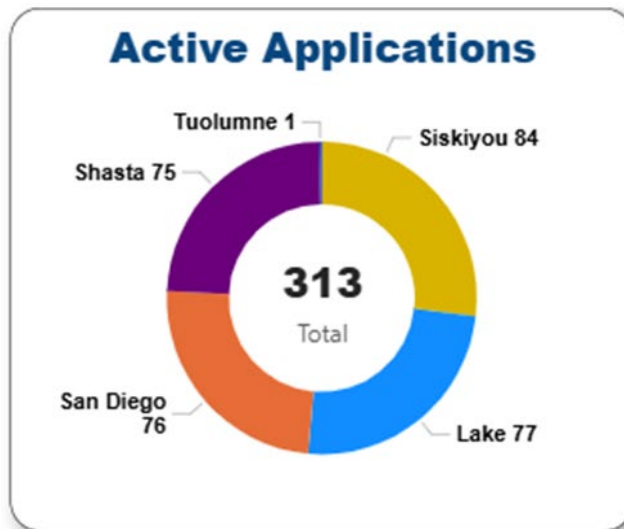
i. Cultural Burn Permits: 1,632

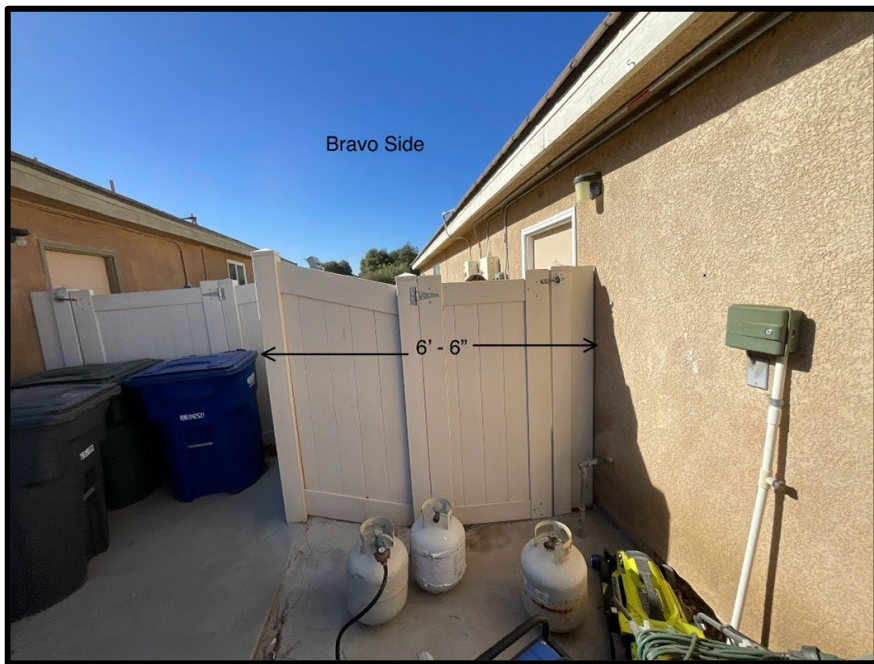
ii. Unit coordinators are working with the permit holders who have requested LE 5/7 burn projects to be sure the parameters are safe and effective.

3. Home Hardening
 - 1) Continuing to develop the Wildland Urban Interface Fire Safety Building Standards Compliance training.
 - 2) Supporting the California Wildfire Mitigation Program with technical assistance in the home hardening recommended retrofits.
 - 3) Collaborating and planning with IBHS for the Wildfire Prepared Home Demonstration burn on September 25, 2025.
4. Utility Wildfire Mitigation Program
 - 1) Currently reviewing PG&E, SDG&E, SCE, BVES, and PacifiCorp, Liberty, and the three ITOs – Trans Bay Cable, Horizon West, and LS Power submitted 2026-28 WMP submission.
 - 2) PSPSs continue due to current weather and red flag events. Just concluded PSPS with SCE that went on for eight days and affected about 14,000 customers.
- i. Wildfire Planning and Statistics – [Fuels Reduction | CAL FIRE](#)
 1. Fuel Reduction Projects
 - a. 86 projects, 17.2% of the goal
 2. Combined Fuel Reduction
 - a. 1,184.8 acres treated, 1.2% of the goal
 - i. Unit Projects – 962.1 acres
 1. Northern Region: 777.9 acres
 2. Southern Region: 184.1 acres
 - b. Grant Projects: 165.2 acres
 - c. CFIP Projects: 57.5 acres
 3. Prescribed Fire (also counted in fuel reduction)
 - a. 386.7 acres treated, 0.8% of the goal
 6. Wildlands Fuels
 - a. Continue to work with contractor on CAL MAPPER V4 mobile application development including a section for grant entry.
 - b. Monthly FRAR sent out on August 10, 2025, including numbers for the first month of FY 25/26.
 - c. Quarterly fiscal year QA/QC reports completed on August 10, 2025.
 7. Pre-Fire Planning
 - a. Hosting a Pre-Fire Orientation Training in November that will be designed for region and unit Pre-Fire Engineers (PFE) and those interested in the PFE position.
 - b. Unit Fire Plans have been posted to the CAL FIRE website.
 - c. Fuels Treatment Effectiveness Reporting (FTERS) are being generated and reviewed as the rise in incidents occur with peak season.

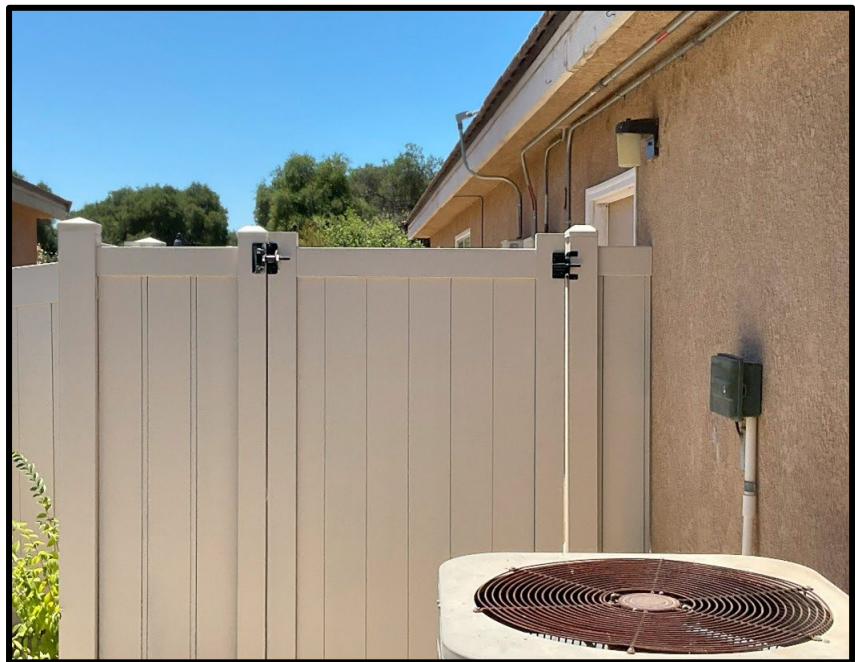
8. CalStats
 - a. The 2024 Redbook has been posted to the CAL FIRE website.
 - b. Continue to work with the units to complete CAL FIRS Reports to ensure a successful transition to the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS) in January 2026.
 - c. During this month's national "NERIS in Action" webinar, California was recognized as the top state in outreach and education about NERIS.
- ii. Community Wildfire Mitigation Assistance
 1. Land Use Planning
 - 1) Program is engaged with numerous jurisdictions statewide in assisting with mandatory submittal of local Safety Elements of General Plans.
 - 2) Safety Element Reviews completed and on the agenda for the August RPC meeting are the cities of Moreno Valley, Buena Park, and Dana Point.
 - 3) Fire Safety Surveys for the cities of Brea and Murrieta have been submitted to the Board for the August RPC meeting.
 2. National Fire Protection Association Firewise USA
 - 1) Currently 1319 communities in good standing
 - i. More than a dozen in the queue!
 3. [CWMA Statewide Clearinghouse Data Center](#)
 - 1) Adding new information all the time!
 - 2) Currently working on new procedures for notification to Constant Contact subscriber list.
 - 3) <http://osfm.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/Community-Wildfire-Preparedness-and-Mitigation/Clearinghouse-Data-Center>
 4. [Wildfire Prevention Grants Program](#)
 - 1) Open solicitation began on July 2, 2025, and closed August 6, 2025.
 - i. Up to \$135 million available
 - ii. Combination of Prop 4 Climate Bond Funds and CCI
 - iii. Received over 400 applications

B. California Wildfire Mitigation Program Update



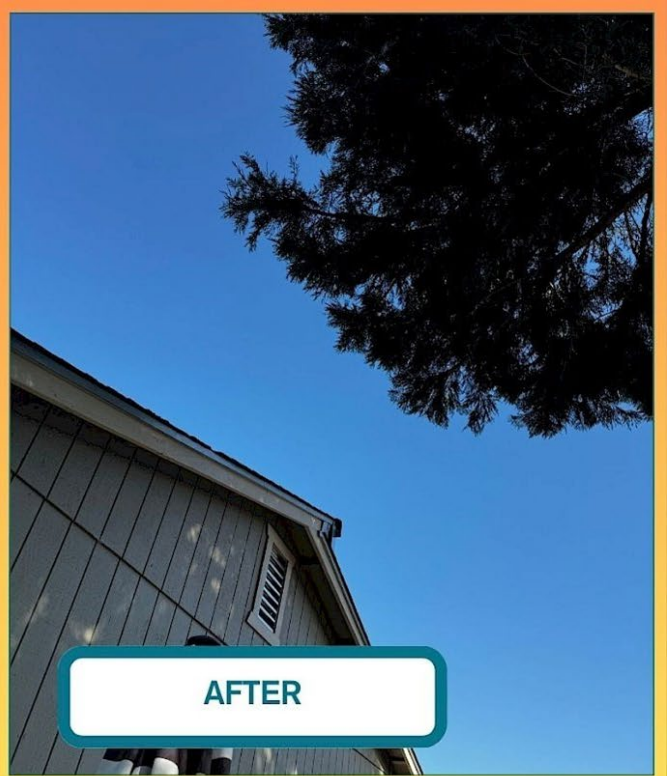
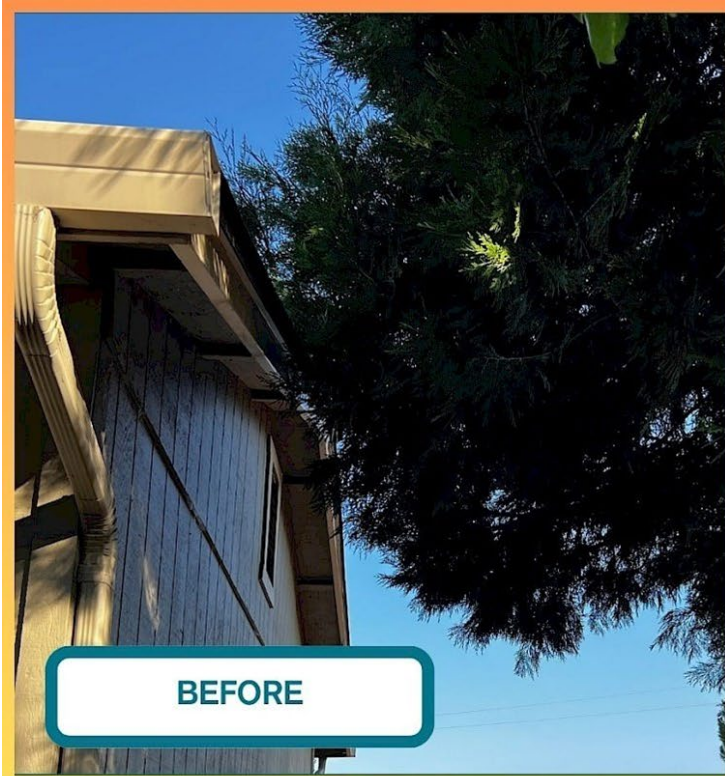


Vinyl Gate & Fence



Replaced with Metal







3. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Neighborhood Wildfire Mitigation Validation Program Workgroup Membership – Internal meetings held regularly. Work continues on the framework. Still finalizing group membership:
- i. Shane Vargas, CAL FIRE, Chair
 - ii. Deboarh Halberstadt, Insurance Commissioner's Office
 - iii. Steve Hawks, IBHS
 - iv. J. Lopez, State Board of Forestry & Fire Protection
 - v. Michael Maguire, Office of Land Use & Climate Innovation
 - vi. Jacy Hyde, California Fire Safe Council
 - vii. Meghan Housewright, NFPA
 - viii. Christopher Ochoa, Building Industry
 - ix. Lisa Lien-Mager, California Natural Resources Agency
 - x. Sean McGlynn (temporary), League of California Cities
 - xi. MJ Lee
- B. Land Use Planning Workgroup – Had the third Land Use Planning Workgroup meeting last month discussing a two-part series on the cost effectiveness of resilient rebuilding. Part one discussed a paper titled “Building Wildfire Resistant Homes After Disasters Will Save Billions” by Headwater Economics. Today that topic will continue with the cost effectiveness of recently rebuilding and will be joined by Steve Fox to discuss an IBHS paper titled “Resilient Rebuilding, a Path Forward for Los Angeles”.

4. PRESENTATIONS

- A. [Task Force Framework for Community Resilience](#) – Forest Schafer, California Natural Resources Agency
- B. [KB Homes Dixon Trail](#) – Steve Ruffner, KB Homes
- C. [Red Cross Community Wildfire Preparedness Program](#) – Jake Janecek, Red Cross

5. ROUNDTABLE

- A. **Lisa Lien-Mager** – Currently working on the streamlining of critical fuels reduction project where people can request this streamlining effort made available through the March 1 Emergency Proclamation that was issued by the governor. Able to intake their information and as a condition of receiving the suspensions of things like CEQA and COSELAC permit in order to fast track the process, the project applicants are agreeing to abide by an environmental protection sign which is a series of best management practices to make sure they're operating in sensitive areas, sensitive species, coastal zones and that they're taking appropriate action to make sure resources are being protected but recognizing that we want the fuels reduction work to happen. There have been 148 projects submitted to date with 80 approved. Some of those are completed already and some underway. There is a map on the [task force landing page](#). There's an online viewer where you can actually see where these projects are and can get details on them. There's quite a bit of diversity with the projects – some are focused on defensible space, prescribed fires, mechanical thinning, fuel breaks, etc. Requests for this need to be submitted by the end of the 2025 calendar year. Criteria is that they begin on the groundwork by October 15, 2026. The expectation is that the work will get done in two years from the time it commences but it is recognized that some projects may take a little longer, especially as it aligns with grant agreements with CAL FIRE.
- B. **Sophia Lemmo** – [Annual Meeting](#) is November 18-20, 2025.
- C. **Staci Heaton** – Golden State Natural Resources, which is working on helping both the Forest Service and other land managers to utilize those materials out of the forest. In June the Board decided that we would no longer do pellets but are going to do wood chips to keep those materials domestic. Working with the US Forest Service on a plan of work to help them do NEPA on some of their bigger landscape-scale projects, so we're trying to get something in place before there is a restructure. CRC recently completed a survey of membership on what counties and communities need in order to scale up their community resilience projects. This is being finalized for public consumption. The CRC [Annual Meeting](#) is coming up at the Olympic Valley Upper Resort on September 17-18, 2025, where there will be a forest resilience panel. There are currently more than 300 people registered.
- D. **Sean McGlynn** – In terms of the National Homeland Security Consortium, there is a significant bipartisan effort on FEMA reform in the public comment period which ends on August 29, 2025. This would be a significant shift for formula-based funding, less as a reimbursable, being more active in the field, preapproved projects.
- E. **Steve Hawks** – Introduction of Laura Blaul and Greg Andersen. Laura recently joined IBHS as the Senior Wildfire Fellow. She was previously the Fire Marshal at Orange County Fire Authority and is currently Chair of the Board of the California Fire Safe Council. Greg Andersen is working with codes and standards for IBHS after retiring from the State Fire Marshal's Office.
- F. **Jaci Hyde** – Successful this year in receiving a budget allocation from the state to support the County Coordinator Program into next year.
- G. **Michael Maguire** – Will be hosting, as part of their biomass aggregation pilot program, a symposium in October to go over - What is biomass? The beneficial uses of biomass,

looking at industry needs in terms of infrastructure financing, permitting, regulatory relief, tax incentives, etc. LCI is working on developing a pilot in the Tahoe Basin in partnership with the Nature Conservancy and Placer County, which will be one of the biomass aggregation pilots, to deploy our biomass digital marketplace tool. This will be the first opportunity to test the tool which houses the Working Forest Planner. This connects licensed timber operators, registered professional foresters, and small private landowners to engage in biomass aggregation of the parcel bubble to generate a sustainable supply of feedstock. Taking over a project in collaboration with our partners at Parker Conservation and ARB on a feedstock chain of custody project. ARB and POC funded a project last July with a grantee of Carbon Direct that created a quantification methodology subject to track fleet stock chain of custody, what the mathematics look like, and ultimately what LCI will be doing through the biomass aggregation pilot program. We will take that QM and produce a verification software system using that quantification methodology. In the process of developing skills work based upon the QM that Carbon Direct developed with ARB and POC. This project will be completed in March of 2026.

- H. **Robert Troy** – CalOES remains focused heavily on supporting LA fire recovery. There are still a lot of employees down there – specifically the public assistance team on infrastructure and eligible governmental costs (Robyn Fennig's team) supporting ember mitigation and resilience opportunities. Long-term recovery support function team is bringing in state/federal partners to support the efforts there and will be keeping a small team down there for a period to come. Last year FEMA did a lot of reforms to their individual assistance program to improve them, most of them positive. A couple things that still remain challenging – as a comparison, the Camp Fire and LA Fire is roughly equivalent to the 13,000-14,000 maybe you've got a number of destroyed homes. The Camp Fire had about \$91 million in FEMA IA and just grants in the end. We're about \$149 million on the LA fires, and that's because this was a pretty significant change of getting money out quickly, and also lifting the capital under insurance, which is a big deal for this group. There's still a huge backlog for folks to submit their final insurance settlements. Hoping they will get those final settlements, will submit them, and then they'll be eligible for some additional funding to help rebuild their homes post-fire. Preparing for, if there is a disaster supplemental, the Governor has requested \$34.9 billion for disaster supplemental. The FEMA Review Council was in LA last week to do a tour. State Directors from regions 9 and 10 met with them to give them direct feedback on what was useful from a western state's perspective.
- I. **Robyn Fennig** – We had a full list of insurers that went out for our hazard mitigation grant program that was allocated with the LA Fire Declaration. We got over 500 sub-application proposals totaling \$3.3 billion in interest – a historic amount of interest in our program. We did get an updated estimate which is about \$850 million. We're in the process of working with everyone who is interested. There's a lot of interest in mitigation right now. Obviously, the shift in federal funding priorities, that's something we're continuing to work with. A lot of them are wildfire, but not just in LA, but across the state and we're trying to figure out the best way to spread out the funding.
- J. **Brian Marshall** – Fire weather is coming this weekend, starting tomorrow, pretty significant fire weather. What amazed me is the bridge of line burn scars. Our prediction is to have a major debris flow from the monsoonal thunderstorms. We will be prepositioning for fire weather and debris flow in Southern California. The after actions and the public records requests from the January fires are eating up a lot of time.
- K. **Lisa Lien Mager for J. Lopez** – Zone Zero is now being called the 5-Foot Safety Zone. A lot of work has been happening at the Board under legislation that passed in 2020 directing the Board to create an ember-resistant zone to add to the existing other zones that we think about around defensible space. Prior to this year the Board invested quite a lot of time in holding public workshops. An advisory committee was formed with tons of

input, then post-January fires the Governor issued an executive order in February to ask the Board to accelerate this, knowing that this is an important piece as we think about community protection. Since that time the Board has formed a new Zone Zero Committee which J. Lopez serves on. They've had six workshops to date with very robust public input and comment in the pre-rulemaking phase. The committee members are really listening and hearing a lot of common themes from folks who feel like we can't pursue a one-size-fits-all. They feel like there are different areas of the state that maybe need different kinds of considerations. They specifically called out very small lot sizes that are less than a 5-foot setback. A lot of folks want to discuss some kinds of vegetation, if it's well hydrated, could be appropriate. The Zone Zero community members have been invited to LA in September. There's a lot of talk about how we can help homeowners prepare and prioritize mitigations in that area and what kind of financial assistance we might be able to think about – there are some allocations in Prop 4 that we think can be utilized.

- L. **Ken DaRosa** – There is an [Interagency Public Briefing](#) happening now from the electric utility companies on their efforts towards safety culture and public safety power shutoff. The morning included PG&E, SoCal Edison, Bear Valley, and others. Those receiving the briefing are made up of members of the Public Utilities Commission, CalOES, the Office of the State Fire Marshal, and Energy Safety.
- M. **J. Lopez** – Making strides with Zone Zero. Think it's a little disconnected so we're trying to make it clearer. There was lots of reinforcement on what we're doing. It feels like it's getting close to the end but there will be 1-2 more workshops.
- N. **Bob Counts** – Fire activity continues to be light to moderate in both CAL FIRE regions with most of the incidents being contained within the goal of 90% of fires being contained in 10 acres or less. There has not been a CAL FIRE Incident Management Team deployment since January, which is abnormal in itself but really abnormal not to have had a deployment since then. This has given the opportunity to assist our neighboring states and other countries. Recently more than 50 personnel were sent to Oregon. We've also sent personnel to Nevada, Texas, Mexico and British Columbia all who have helped us out year after year, so it's great to be able to give back. Firehawks 15 and 16 have been placed into service and this marks the end of a multi-year contract with United Rotorcraft out of Colorado, that had an agreement to build 16 of these Firehawks. The third C130 should be placed into service in the next two weeks. C130s 4 and 5 are in their hangars beginning their demilitarization and are in the process of installing the retardant systems. Recently signed into the Western States Compact which allows additional ways to obtain resources from our neighboring western states. This agreement is between the state foresters to share resources between state departments. Eric Huff is the new Deputy Director of Resource Management taking the place of Matt Reichman who recently retired.
- O. **Daniel Berlant** – Today Frank Bigelow was nominated as Chair of the Community Wildfire Mitigation Program Authority and Robert Troy was nominated as Vice Chair. A number of agencies joined the CPUC and Energy Safety Board at the Interagency Safety Briefing. More information can be found [here](#). Each of the utilities was required to provide a presentation so there's lots of great information happening in that space. A number of you, since the January fires, have been advocating or wondering about the rebuild, and to what standard rebuilding will occur. On July 7 the Governor signed an Executive Order and weighed the rebuilding to be done to the existing 2022 code, not the 2025 code, with the exception of the provisions and requirements presented by the State Fire Marshal in the 2025 code. All codes are held to 2022, except for ours. The rebuild will be built to the latest safety codes.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Daniel Berlant

A. J. Lopez

The California Wildfire Mitigation Program is doing a media event in Shasta County and would like to invite WMAC members to the October 21, 2025, event and would like to see if this meeting would like to be held in Shasta County to celebrate the first home being done.

7. UPCOMING MEETING DATES FOR 2025

Daniel Berlant

A. September 16, 2025

715 P Street, 2nd Floor, 2-221
Sacramento, CA 95814

8. MEETING ADJOURNED 2:54 PM

Daniel Berlant