



COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS & MITIGATION PROGRAMS REPORT

Public Resources Code Section
4209.3
(Chapter 225, Statutes of 2021)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2021, the Legislature passed Assembly Bill (AB) 9 (Chapter 225, Statutes of 2021) adding Public Resources Code (PRC) §4209 establishing within the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) a Deputy Director of Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation who is responsible for fire preparedness and mitigation missions of the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), as specified in PRC 4209.1 through 4209.5. Per PRC 4209.3, the State Fire Marshal shall provide a report to the Legislature identifying known personnel and resource shortfalls in implementing the programs and activities overseen by the Deputy Director of Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation pursuant to the article.

This report includes a summary of the programs under the purview of the Deputy Director of Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation, as well as all known personnel and resource shortfalls in each of the following programs:

- Wildfire Preparedness Program
- The California Wildfire Mitigation Financial Assistance Program
- Utility Wildfire Mitigation Program
- Pre-Fire Planning Program
- Land Use Planning Program
- Wildfire Prevention Grants Program

Additionally, because the CAL FIRE Wildfire Prevention Grants Program is an immensely popular grant program that provides critical funding needed to implement preparedness and mitigation projects, it is oversubscribed with the amount of funding requested versus the amount of funding available. CAL FIRE recommends increasing the funding for the Wildfire Prevention Grants Program to an amount commensurate with the need.

CAL FIRE also recommends an extension of the California Wildfire Mitigation Financial Assistance Program (Government Code 8654.10(c)), which is due to sunset on July 1, 2025.

BACKGROUND

Wildfire has long been a part of California's history. California arrived at our present emergency condition through the combined factors of deliberately excluding fire on the landscape, forest management policies, climate change, persistent drought, land use decisions, and population growth. The combination of these factors is putting millions of Californians, homes, and communities at risk of more frequent and destructive wildfires. In the past decade, California has experienced the most destructive wildfire years in State history, with over 57,000 structures being destroyed. The most destructive year was 2018, with 24,227 structures damaged or destroyed. The 2018 Camp Fire was both the deadliest fire in State history, claiming the lives of 85 people, as well as the most destructive, destroying 18,804 structures and virtually destroying the Town of Paradise. The 2020 fire year saw an unprecedented 4.3 million acres burned and 10,621 structures damaged or destroyed. Fifteen of the top twenty most destructive wildfires in State history have occurred since 2015, including the Camp, Tubbs, North Complex, Valley, Woolsey, Carr, and Glass Fires.

CAL FIRE is dedicated to the fire protection, prevention, and stewardship of over 31 million acres of California's privately-owned wildlands. In addition, the Department provides varied emergency services in more than half of the State's counties via contracts with local agencies. PRC 714 states CAL FIRE is responsible for providing fire protection and prevention services and maintaining an integrated staff to accomplish these activities as needed. Additionally, PRC 4119 directs CAL FIRE to enforce the State's forest and fire laws.

CAL FIRE's mission is to serve and safeguard the people and protect the property and resources of California. Preventing wildfires and preparing communities in the State Responsibility Area (SRA) is a vital part of CAL FIRE's mission. While these efforts have occurred since the early days of the Department, CAL FIRE has adapted to a changing climate and the increasing destructiveness of wildfires. The Department utilizes an "all of the above" strategy to prevent wildfire and ensure communities become more resilient to wildfire impacts. This approach is multi-pronged, emphasizing the importance of activities including defensible space inspections, home hardening, damage inspection, utility wildfire mitigation, mechanical and prescribed fire fuel reduction, fire hazard severity mapping, pre-fire planning, reporting incident statistics, land use planning, providing grant funding, public education, and law enforcement. Homeowner efforts on defensible space and home hardening, combined with community level fuel breaks and landscape-level projects, create the spectrum of wildfire prevention activities that must be undertaken to truly make a difference.

In 2021, the Legislature passed Assembly Concurrent Resolution 33, stating that the Legislature is committed to improving wildfire outcomes by investing in wildfire preparedness and mitigation strategies. The Legislature and Governor have allocated historic spending on wildfire and forest resilience with \$1.5 billion in Fiscal Years 2020/21 and 2021/22 combined, and an additional \$1.2 billion in Fiscal Years 2022/23 and 2023/24 combined. Additionally, the Legislature passed AB 9 adding PRC 4209 establishing within the OSFM a Deputy Director of Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation who is responsible for fire preparedness and mitigation missions of CAL FIRE, as specified in PRC 4209.1 through 4209.5.

AB 9 brought the following existing programs and requirements of CAL FIRE under the oversight of the Deputy Director of Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation:

- General Plan Safety Element review;
- Subdivision Review;
- State Minimum Fire Safe Development standards;
- Wildfire Prevention Grants;
- Defensible Space;
- California Wildfire Mitigation Financial Assistance;
- Wildland Building Code Standards development;
- Wildfire Mitigation Plans;
- Fire Hazard Severity Zones; and
- California Incident Data and Statistics.

Additionally, AB 9 established the State Fire Marshal's Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Committee and the Community Wildfire Mitigation Assistance Program under the Deputy Director to provide a consistent and regular means of communication on topics related to community wildfire preparedness and fire mitigation between CAL FIRE and representatives of relevant industries, State agencies, fire service agencies, and other stakeholders.

It is important to note that CAL FIRE has seen a large investment by the administration and legislature in recent one-time funding for wildfire prevention over the past couple of years through the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Budget Packages. These funds have provided funding for limited term staffing to assist CAL FIRE in meeting its various wildfire prevention and community preparedness mandates, while providing local assistance dollars that are granted to outside organizations and have augmented existing CAL FIRE programs. While the department is working closely with the administration and legislature to find a long-term funding solution, this report is aimed to provide details on how that funding and personnel would meet CAL Fire's fire prevention mandates and goals.

**Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Report to the Legislature,
CAL FIRE – OSFM, Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Division**

The program is only one part of California’s Wildfire Resilience Program, which spans 40 programs across 22 departments.”

Below are examples of one-time funding CAL FIRE has received for community wildfire preparedness and mitigation efforts from Fiscal Year 2020/21 through 2022/23.

Fiscal Year 2022/23

- \$115M Wildfire Prevention Grants (\$80M GF and \$35M GGRF)
- \$5M Defensible Space Inspector Augmentation
- \$13M Home Hardening to Cal OES (JPA with CalOES)
- \$2M Land Use Planning
- \$20M CAL FIRE Unit Fire Prevention Projects

Fiscal Year 2021/22

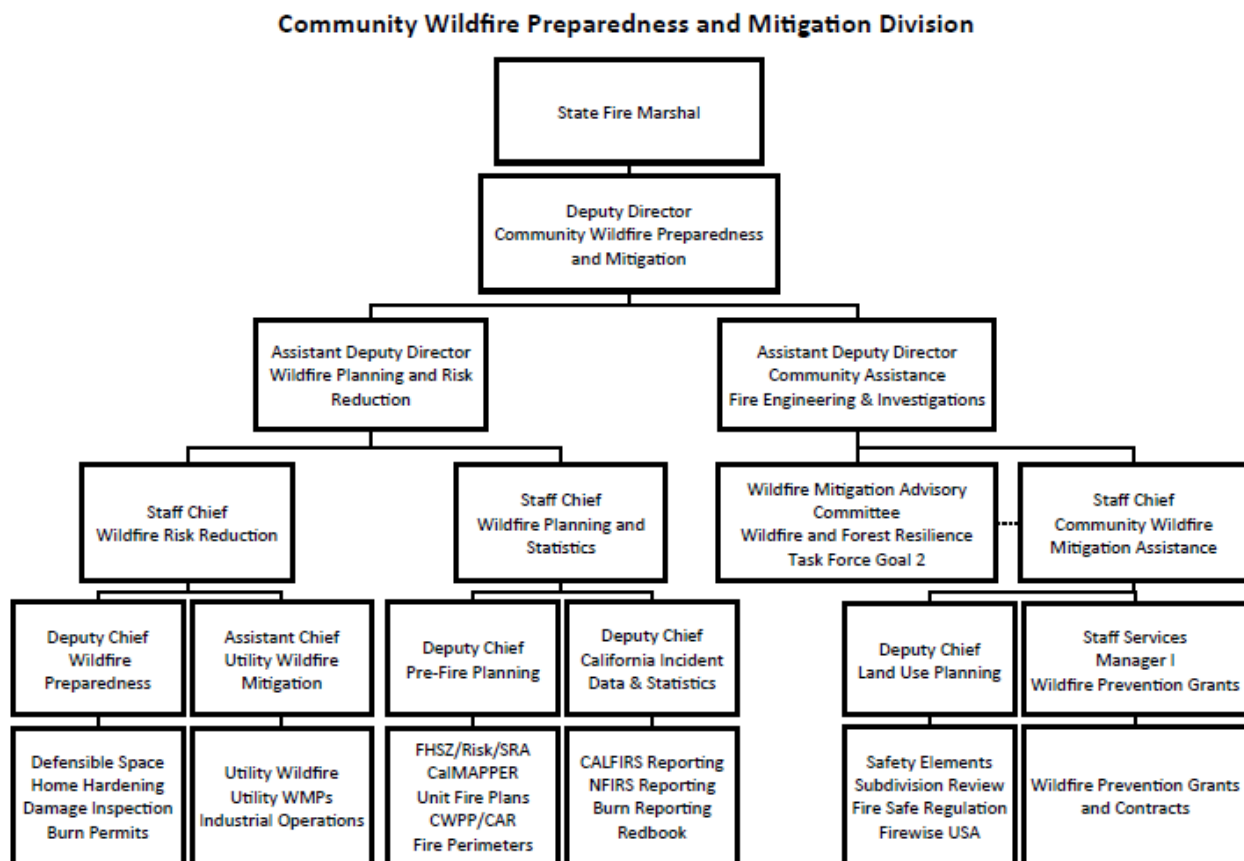
- \$120M Wildfire Prevention Grants (\$40M GF and \$80M GGRF)
- \$13M Defensible Space Inspector Augmentation
- \$5M Land Use Planning
- \$40M CAL FIRE Unit Fire Prevention Projects

Fiscal Year 2020/21

- \$123M Wildfire Prevention Grants (\$73M GF and \$50M GGRF)
- \$2M Defensible Space Inspector Augmentation
- \$25M Home Hardening: \$3.076M to CAL FIRE and \$21.924M to CalOES
- \$10M CAL FIRE Unit Fire Prevention Projects

As wildfires over the past several years have highlighted, California’s changing climate will continue to threaten Californian’s ways of life. We must all work towards a natural environment that is more fire resilient; buildings and infrastructure that are more fire resistant; and a society that is more aware of and responsive to the benefits and threats of wildfire; all achieved through local, State, federal, tribal, and private partnerships. CAL FIRE’s Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation division is a vital part of preparing people, homes, and communities against the potential devastating impacts of wildfire.

Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Division Org Chart



WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM

The Wildfire Preparedness Program within the Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Division strives to reduce or eliminate fire hazards and risks, change the environment by removing or reducing the heat source, modifying or reducing the fuels, and modifying the act or omission allowing the heat source to contact ignitable fuels.

Wildfire Preparedness programs include defensible space inspections, damage inspections, home hardening, and burn permits. These programs contribute to CAL FIRE's mission to prevent the ignition of unwanted wildfires, while preparing people, homes, and communities against their potential devastating impacts.

Defensible Space

PRC 4291 requires a person who owns, leases, controls, operates, or maintains a building or structure in, upon, or adjoining a mountainous area, forest-covered lands, shrub-covered lands, grass-covered lands, or land that is covered with flammable material, to maintain defensible space of 100 feet surrounding the structure. The California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 14 § 1299 is the accompanying regulation to PRC 4291 and provides specific requirements for defensible space compliance. The goal of defensible space is to remove, reduce, or relocate combustible materials to disrupt the pathways that transmit a wildfire directly to a home by direct flame contact, radiant heat, and windblown embers. Defensible space is defined by three distinct zones from 0-5' (ember-resistant zone as required by AB 3074 (Chapter 259, Statutes of 2020)), 5-30' (lean, clean, and green zone), and 30-100' (reduced fuel zone). The intensity of fuel reduction varies within the 100 foot perimeter with more stringent fuel reduction being required in the zones closer to the home.

CAL FIRE's Defensible Space Program has been in existence for nearly 60 years with the addition of PRC 4291 in 1965. The Defensible Space Program emphasizes educating homeowners on the definition and importance of defensible space and how to achieve compliance with the law to prevent the loss of life and mass destruction of homes. Defensible Space Inspectors (DSIs) are the primary workforce that CAL FIRE utilizes to conduct inspections of properties to ensure compliance with the law. Along with CAL FIRE's engine companies, the DSIs provide an important contact for homeowners to improve defensible space education and compliance, but also to discuss home hardening and other important wildfire preparedness actions. Proper defensible space, when combined with home hardening, is critical in protecting the lives of people unable to evacuate ahead of fast-moving wildfires and gives firefighters a safe space from which they can defend the structure without facing unacceptable risk to their lives.

In 2013, the Fire Severity, Treatment, Education, Prevention, and Planning (Fire STEPP) Budget Change Proposal (BCP) provided CAL FIRE with 94.5 seasonal Forestry Aide positions to work as DSIs. This provided CAL FIRE with its first dedicated staff to conduct defensible space inspections three months out of the year. Historically, the DSI positions have been able to conduct an average of 137,000 inspections per year, with an average length of inspection of 15 minutes per property. Through several years of one-time augmented funding, the Department was able to extend the Forestry Aide positions from three months by an additional six months to a total of nine months (the maximum allowed for a seasonal position). This augmentation allowed CAL FIRE to surpass 250,000 inspections Statewide for the first time during Fiscal Year 2021-22, completing 289,255 inspections.

In 2021, CAL FIRE received an additional 21 permanent DSI positions to meet the defensible space compliance hazard disclosure requirements of AB 38 (Chapter 391, Statutes of 2019) and the addition of Civil Code (CIV) 1102.19. The 21 positions were determined by using data from the Department of Housing and Community Development and California Association of Realtors from 2018 and 2019, and extrapolating that to home sales in the SRA. Based on that data and the number of inspections an inspector can conduct, 21 permanent positions were determined to be needed. However, due to actual AB 38 inspection data, it has been determined the 21 positions are not enough to meet the inspection demand.

In 2020, AB 3074 (Chapter 259, Statutes of 2020) established the new 0-5' ember-resistant zone. AB 3074 requires the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board), in consultation with CAL FIRE, to promulgate the regulation for the ember-resistant zone. This regulatory process is currently underway to update CCR Title 14 § 1299. Once promulgated, the DSIs will need to spend more time at each property explaining the requirements of the new ember-resistant zone, evaluating the property for compliance, and explaining how to achieve compliance. Based on data from previous inspections, the Department believes the average length of inspection will increase from 15 minutes to 30 minutes per property. Additionally, CAL FIRE defensible space inspection data shows that 82 percent of properties receiving a defensible space first inspection are compliant. The Department believes the new ember-resistant zone will result in a nearly zero percent defensible space first inspection compliance rate. Consequently, the DSIs will spend more time conducting reinspection's than inspecting new properties. CAL FIRE did not receive any additional positions to educate and enforce the new requirement and currently does not have sufficient resources to do so.

CAL FIRE has identified the following shortfalls inhibiting the Department from meeting its defensible space statutory mandates and annual goal of completing 250,000 individual

parcel inspections, as well as the needs of the State as outlined in Key Action items 2.12, 2.13, and 2.14 of the Governor’s Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan:

- Staff to act as leads for the Defensible Space Program at the Unit level and supervise the Forestry Technicians and Forestry Aides, coordinate defensible space inspections within each Unit and amongst cooperating agencies, and perform defensible space inspections in accordance with PRC 4291, CCR Title 14 § 1299, CIV1102.19, and the new ember-resistant zone established by AB 3074.
- Staff to perform defensible space inspections in accordance with PRC 4291, CCR Title 14 § 1299, CIV 1102.19, and the new ember-resistant zone established by AB 3074.
- An annual appropriation to fund the current 94.5 seasonal DSIs from the Fire STEPP BCP for a full 9 months every year.
- An annual appropriation for data collection licenses and applications.

Burn Permits

PRC 4423 requires a person wishing to burn flammable material in the SRA to receive a written permit from CAL FIRE. CAL FIRE Burn Permits are only valid within the SRA or where CAL FIRE has jurisdictional authority, and only during specific times of the year. CAL FIRE issues burn permits to persons for residential burning, agricultural burning, and prescribed and cultural burning.

PRC 4491 requires the Department to cooperate with a person desiring to use prescribed burning as a way to convert brush-covered lands into forage lands or to help meet wildland management goals, which includes the prevention of high intensity wildland fires, watershed management, range improvement, vegetation management, forest improvement, wildlife habitat improvement, restoring ecological integrity and resilience, community wildfire protection, carbon resilience, enhancement of culturally important resources, and maintenance of air quality, or any combination thereof, that is declared to be for a public purpose. It is through this cooperation that a person may apply to the Department for permission to utilize prescribed burning for public purposes. The Department may issue a burning permit that must specify the site preparation requirements and required precautions to be exercised before and during the burning.

CAL FIRE utilizes unit staff to process and implement permit applications from the public for these purposes. The Department must provide advisory service to applicants for permits regarding precautions that must be taken by the applicant in order to prevent damage to the property of others from the prescribed burn. The Department must also provide standby fire protection, to the extent personnel, fire crews, and firefighting equipment are available. Currently, the responsibility to implement these provisions falls on unit staff in the form of “other duties as required.”

AB 642 (Chapter 375, Statutes of 2021) requires CAL FIRE to develop and deploy an automated system for issuing burn permits, and to not unreasonably restrict prescribed burns that are within prescription. There is also a renewed interest in bringing more prescribed and cultural burning (beneficial fire) back to the landscape as a mitigation strategy to increase forest health and protect communities from the risk of wildfire. As this program expands and more applications for prescribed and cultural burning are submitted, dedicated permanent staff will be required to administer and maintain the automated burn permit system.

CAL FIRE has identified the following shortfalls inhibiting the Department from meeting its statutory mandates and the State's desire to bring more beneficial fire back to the landscape:

- Additional Analyst positions for ongoing program administrative and technical support for both the public and CAL FIRE staff. Based on the actual workload of developing and maintaining the online application and database, two additional positions are needed to meet the additional workload.

CALIFORNIA BUILDING STANDARDS CODE CHAPTER 7A

Health and Safety Code (HSC) 13108.5 requires the State Fire Marshal, in consultation with the Director of Forestry and Fire Protection and the Director of Housing and Community Development, to develop fire protection building standards for construction in wildfire prone areas. The California Building Standards Code Chapter 7A (Chapter 7A) is the accompanying regulation that applies to building materials, systems, and/or assemblies used in the exterior design and construction of new buildings after July 1, 2008. The purpose of Chapter 7A is to establish minimum standards for the protection of life and property by increasing the ability of a building to resist the intrusion of flames, radiant heat, or burning embers projected by a vegetation fire and contributes to a systematic reduction in conflagration losses. Chapter 7A applies to new buildings constructed in the SRA, and the very high, high, and potentially moderate FHSZs in the Local Responsibility Area (LRA), or land designated as a Wildland Interface Fire Area by a local agency.

The OSFM has a standing Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Building Standards work group that meets regularly to evaluate if changes need to be made to Chapter 7A. The work group is comprised of representatives from the fire service, federal, state, and local agencies, research institutions, academia, associations, and industry. Recommendations are made by the WUI Building Standards work group to the State Fire Marshal to be considered for modification of Chapter 7A during the Triennial and Intervening Code cycles.

CAL FIRE has not identified any current shortfalls to meet the mandate of HSC 13108.5.

THE CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE MITIGATION FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Governor Newsom stated in a State of Emergency proclamation on March 22, 2019, that there are an estimated 2.2 million housing units in the WUI, and the majority of these structures reside in a high or very high Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ). The vast majority of these structures were built prior to the adoption of the current WUI building standards in the Chapter 7A. Through the analysis of CAL FIRE's defensible space and damage inspection data, the Department has determined that Chapter 7A has a statistically significant positive effect on a structure's ability to survive a wildfire. Consequently, the large number of structures in the State that were built before Chapter 7A should be retrofitted to the Chapter 7A standard, making them more resilient to wildfire.

The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) and CAL FIRE have entered into a Joint Powers Agreement to administer a comprehensive wildfire mitigation program to encourage cost-effective wildfire resilience measures to create fire-resistant homes, businesses, and public buildings as required by AB 38 and the addition of Government Code (GOV) 8654.2. Mitigation measures such as structure retrofitting (home hardening), vegetation management, defensible space, and other fuel modification activities provide neighborhood and community-wide benefits against wildfire. Cal OES and CAL FIRE have created the framework for a Statewide program that enables local agencies to implement the program at the local level.

Cal OES and CAL FIRE conducted a Statewide analysis at the parcel and census-tract level of areas with high wildfire hazard and social vulnerability. Fire hazard, climate change factors, and census data for residents in poverty, with a disability, over 65 years of age, under 5 years of age, with language barriers, and without a car were used in the analysis. These are the areas and populations in the State that are most vulnerable to wildfire's devastating impacts. The communities of Dulzura (San Diego County), Whitmore (Shasta County), Kelseyville Riviera (Lake County), Ponderosa Hills/Mira Monte (Tuolumne County), and Weber Creek (El Dorado County) have been selected as pilot project sites.

Cal OES staff have been working with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) representatives to process the initial applications for the pilot project sites and are also working on streamlining the environmental compliance process. The Joint Powers Authority has set a target of 25 homes retrofitted each for the initial pilot program sites for the first year and a total of 500 homes retrofitted for each of the project sites. The goal is to leverage as much FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funding to support the financing of the program, allowing more homes to be retrofitted than would be

accomplished with State funding only. However, federal funding is not guaranteed and there is a significant number of structures built prior to the implementation of Chapter 7A in wildfire prone areas. Additionally, the California Wildfire Mitigation Financial Assistance Program is due to sunset on July 1, 2025. **The home hardening program must be extended to allow retrofitting to occur on the scale needed to prepare homes to withstand a wildfire event.**

CAL FIRE has identified the following shortfalls inhibiting the Department's ability to meet its statutory requirements and the home hardening needs of the State as outlined in Key Action items 2.17 and 2.18 of the Governor's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan:

- CAL FIRE received three permanent positions (one Assistant Chief, one Associate Governmental Program Analyst, and one Research Data Specialist III) to administer the California Wildfire Mitigation Financial Assistance Program with Cal OES. However, CAL FIRE did not receive permanent ongoing funding for the three positions from AB 38, and the expenditure date for the initial funding ended on June 30, 2023. CAL FIRE needs an annual appropriation to fund these three positions.
- Currently, GOV 8654.10(c) has a sunset date of July 1, 2025, and as of this date, the article is repealed. This sunset date needs to be removed to continue this critical program beyond July 1, 2025.
- Additional staff are needed to accomplish the additional workload created by the expansion of this important program. The addition of the pilot communities increased the need for support of outreach and education initiatives.
- Additional ongoing funding is needed for Cal OES to expand the California Wildfire Mitigation Financial Assistance Program to more communities throughout the State and at the pace and scale needed.
- An annual appropriation to CAL FIRE is needed for research grants to continue work with the Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety, National Institute of Standards and Technology, and other partners to improve home hardening research and guidance.

UTILITY WILDFIRE MITIGATION PROGRAM

Electrical power presents a specific hazard of ignitions in wildland areas and accounts for roughly 10% of all wildland fires caused annually. In 2017 and 2018, several major wildfires spread throughout the State caused by utility-related ignitions, some of which were the most destructive, deadliest, and largest in California history. In response to the loss of property and lives from utility-caused ignitions and climate change, Senate Bill (SB) 1028 (Chapter 598, Statutes of 2016) and SB 901 (Chapter 626, Statutes of 2018) brought increased oversight of the electrical corporations' efforts to reduce utility-related wildfires. The bills led to new provisions of the California Public Utilities Code (PUC) 8386, requiring electrical corporations to prepare and submit a Wildfire Mitigation Plan (WMP) for review and approval by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). SB 901 then required CAL FIRE to review and comment on the WMPs, and enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the CPUC. This led to the creation of the Utility Wildfire Mitigation Program within CAL FIRE's Office of the State Fire Marshal.

CAL FIRE continues to annually review and comment on the WMPs with the CPUC and the new Office of Energy and Infrastructure Safety (Energy Safety) established by AB 1054 (Chapter 79, Statutes of 2019). Working in consultation with these agencies, CAL FIRE provides input, feedback, and comments during the annual reviews of eight WMPs from the electrical corporations and independent transmission operators. This requires subject matter expertise in several programmatic areas of CAL FIRE to address each of the elements outlined in PUC 8386, 8386.3, and 8386.5. Some of the specific subject matter areas where CAL FIRE provides expertise are in risk assessment and mapping, situational awareness and forecasting, grid hardening efforts, grid operations, vegetation management, and public safety power shutoffs initiatives to try to reduce risk of ignitions. The initial WMPs submitted were around 100-200 pages, but now the WMPs are over 1,000 pages each.

Additionally, CAL FIRE consults annually with Energy Safety in the development of a list of qualified independent evaluators with experience in assessing the safe operation of electrical infrastructure per PUC 8386, which provides electrical corporations an approved list to use for independent evaluators to assess the electrical corporation's compliance with its WMP.

CAL FIRE also enforces PRC 4292, which includes the required pole clearance at the base of any pole or tower that supports equipment that can cause arcs and sparks under normal operations (e.g., switches, fuses, transformers, lightning arresters, etc.). CAL FIRE permits exceptions from the PRC 4292 pole clearance requirements when electrical equipment has gone through an electrical testing exemption process.

CAL FIRE has identified the following shortfalls inhibiting the Department from meeting its statutory requirements and the needs of the State as outlined in Key Action item 2.21 of the Governor's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan:

- Additional funding to ensure there is effective management, direction, oversight, and consistent leadership of the Utility Wildfire Mitigation Program. Upgrading the existing Assistant Chief position to a Deputy Chief would be more suitable when interacting with high level representatives with federal, State, and local agencies, as well as outside organizations and electrical corporation executives.
- An additional position is needed to enable staff to further focus on specific subject matter expertise areas within the WMP reviews without relying as heavily on other outside programs within CAL FIRE during the review process. As the wildfire mitigation plan guidelines continue to evolve annually, it has increased the amount of material and expertise required to consult in the review effectively and efficiently with Energy Safety each year.
- An annual appropriation to fund a contracted electrical engineer who will provide subject matter expertise when developing test plans for electrical corporations or manufacturers seeking equipment exemptions and validating the test results prior to approving an equipment exemption from PRC 4292. This will further improve the goal of reducing utility-related wildfires.

PRE-FIRE PLANNING PROGRAM

The Pre-Fire Planning Program forms the basis for assessing California’s complex and dynamic natural and built environments and utilizes a variety of actions to minimize the negative effects and enhance the positive effects of wildfire.

Fire Hazard Severity Zones

PRC 4201-4204 were added in 1982, requiring the OSFM to provide for the classification of lands within the SRA in accordance with the severity of fire hazard present for the purpose of identifying measures to be taken to slow the rate of spreading and to reduce the potential intensity of uncontrolled fires that threaten to destroy resources, life, or property. The State Fire Marshal, by regulation, shall designate FHSZs and assign each zone a rating reflecting the degree of severity of fire hazard that is expected to exist in the zone. Each zone shall have relatively homogeneous lands based on fuel loading, slope, fire weather, and other relevant factors present including areas where winds have been identified by the OSFM as a major cause of wildfire spread.

The “Bates Bill” (AB 337, 1992), created GOV 51175-51189, was prompted by the devastating 1991 Oakland Hills Fire. The Bates Bill called for CAL FIRE to evaluate fire hazard severity in the LRA and to make a recommendation to local agencies where very high FHSZs exist. The GOV then provides direction for the local agencies to take appropriate wildfire mitigation actions. GOV 51178 was amended by AB 642 and SB 63 (Chapter 382, Statutes of 2021) to require the State Fire Marshal to identify areas in the LRA as moderate and high in addition to the already existing very high FHSZs based on consistent Statewide criteria and the severity of fire hazard that is expected to prevail in those areas. Moderate, high, and very high FHSZs must be based on fuel loading, slope, fire weather, and other relevant factors including areas where winds have been identified by the OSFM as a major cause of wildfire spread.

PRC 4204 requires the State Fire Marshal to periodically review the zones in the SRA and, as necessary, revise zones or their ratings. GOV 51181 requires the State Fire Marshal to periodically review the areas in the State identified as very high fire FHSZ, and as necessary, make recommendations relative to very high fire hazard severity zones. This review shall coincide with the review of SRA lands every five years and, when possible, fall within the time frames for each county’s general plan update. Any revision of areas included in a very high FHSZ shall be made in accordance with GOV 51178 and 51179.

The Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Division, in coordination with CAL FIRE's Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP), is currently conducting a remap of the FHSZs in the SRA and LRA. The State Fire Marshal, per PRC 4203, is required to adopt the SRA FHSZ map for all 31 million acres in the SRA by regulation. The requirements of AB 642 and SB 63, combined with the remap, have increased the number of local agencies impacted by the LRA FHSZ maps and the number of local agencies the OSFM assists in the FHSZ map adoption process. CAL FIRE anticipates the number of local agencies needing assistance with the adoption of the LRA FHSZ maps will significantly increase to well over 400 jurisdictions, up from 245 jurisdictions during the last remap in 2007/2008.

CAL FIRE has identified the following shortfalls inhibiting the Department from fully supporting the development and implementation of FHSZs as identified in Goal 2, Key Action item 2.3 of the Wildfire and Forestry Resilience Action Plan.

- Additional legal counsel to provide guidance and legal advice to navigate the legal complexities required for regulatory adoption and implementation of FHSZs; review and provide recommendations to the program on all laws and regulations applicable and provide recommendations; and provide legal counsel for all programs in Goal 2 of the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan for the Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Division.
- Additional analyst staff to assist in the development of regulatory packages, receive, and analyze public comments, develop responses, and ensure the public is noticed through the adoption process; and provide analytical and technical support to program management, units, and local agencies related to the adoption process.
- Additional staff to assist in the development, review, and adoption of the FHSZ maps; develop tools for CAL FIRE and local agency map review to track comments and create maps for regulatory adoption; and maintain maps and web viewers on the internet for public viewing.

Unit Fire Plans

The vision of the 2018 Strategic Fire Plan for California (2018 Plan) is a natural environment that is more fire resilient; buildings and infrastructure that are more fire resistant; and a society that is more aware of and responsive to the benefits and threats of wildland fire; all achieved through local, State, federal, tribal, and private partnerships.

The goals that are critical to achieving the 2018 Plan vision revolve around fire prevention, natural resource management, and fire suppression efforts, as broadly construed. Major components are:

- Improve the availability and use of consistent, shared information on hazard and risk assessment;
- Promote the role of local planning processes, including general plans, new development, and existing developments, and recognize individual landowner/homeowner responsibilities;
- Foster a shared vision among communities and the multiple fire protection jurisdictions, including county-based plans and community-based plans such as Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs);
- Increase awareness and actions to improve fire resistance of man-made assets at risk and fire resilience of wildland environments through natural resource management;
- Integrate implementation of fire and vegetative fuels management practices consistent with the priorities of landowners or managers;
- Determine and seek the needed level of resources for fire prevention, natural resource management, fire suppression, and related services; and
- Implement needed assessments and actions for post-fire protection and recovery.

Each CAL FIRE Unit and Contract County vary greatly in size, terrain, and fire suppression strategies. For this reason, individual Unit Fire Plans are completed annually to address how each CAL FIRE Unit and Contract County is achieving the goals and objectives of the 2018 Plan. Annual updates to the Unit Fire Plans are due June 1 of each year. To simplify the process for annual updates, a Unit Fire Plan Template has been created. This template allows for the inclusion of minor updates in addendums to the existing plan. Major changes in priorities, partnerships, projects, or plan components may require a new Unit Fire Plan to be developed and submitted.

CAL FIRE has identified the following shortfalls inhibiting the Department from meeting the wildfire preparedness and mitigation needs of the State as outlined in Key Action items 2.1, 2.9, and 2.10 of the Governor’s Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan:

- Additional staff to oversee and coordinate the development and implementation of risk modeling and fuels reduction project planning tools to implement a scientific and consistent method for prioritizing projects; assist the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (BOF) with updates to the Strategic Fire Plan for California and provide annual reports to the BOF, Legislature, and executive staff; and update Unit Fire Plan templates to accurately address changes in the Strategic Fire Plan for California and update policy and procedures.

- Additional Unit level staff to be responsible for the continued evolution of the Unit Fire Plan, prioritizing Unit fuel treatment projects, coordinating projects with cooperating entities, ensuring environmental compliance, and executing those treatments; provide oversight and support of all grant projects being implemented within the Unit by outside entities; ensure all fuels projects completed or funded by CAL FIRE are reported timely and accurately in the Department's fuels treatment database; and assist the State in achieving its goal of treating 500,000 acres annually by 2025.
- Unit level Research Data Analyst staff to provide Geographic Information System (GIS) support for projects completed or funded by CAL FIRE and ensure projects are reported timely and accurately in the Department's fuels treatment database; and assist partner agencies to meet the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force's need for improving joint reporting capabilities across multiple entities.
- Additional Unit level Environmental Scientist staff to assist in the planning and implementation of Unit fuel treatment projects. Will ensure environmental compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and other requirements for projects implemented or funded by CAL FIRE within the Unit; and conduct pre and post monitoring of prescribed fire and other types of fuel reduction projects to evaluate project effectiveness and ecological outcomes. This would support CAL FIRE's and the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force's understanding of the effectiveness of vegetation management treatments and the goal of treating 500,000 acres annually by 2025.

Community Wildfire Protection Plans

The Healthy Forests Initiative (HFI), officially the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (P.L. 108-148), is a law originally proposed by President George W. Bush in response to the widespread forest fires during the summer of 2002. The main goals of the law are to thin overstocked stands, clear away vegetation and trees to create shaded fuel breaks, provide funding and guidance to reduce or eliminate hazardous fuels in National Forests, improve forest fire fighting, and research new methods to halt destructive insects. Much of the basis for the law revolves around the overcrowding of forests due to the suppression of low intensity fires, which vary in their natural role of thinning small trees and clearing vegetative debris. The resulting buildup of ground fuels and trees weakened by overpopulation (resource competition and spread of disease) poses a serious threat in some stands that can no longer be addressed through prescribed burnings. Disagreement exists concerning the role of private logging companies in thinning stands and clearing firebreaks. The HFI also requires that communities within the WUI create

"community wildfire protection plans." CWPPs designate areas adjacent to communities that should be thinned so that crown fires will not directly burn into communities.

A CWPP is developed in the collaborative framework established by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council and agreed to by state, tribal, and local government, the local fire department, other stakeholders, and federal land management agencies managing land in the vicinity of the planning area. A CWPP identifies and prioritizes areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments; recommends the types and methods of treatment on federal and non-federal land that will protect one or more at-risk communities and essential infrastructure; and recommends measures to reduce structural ignitability throughout the at-risk community. A CWPP may address issues such as wildfire response, hazard mitigation, community preparedness, or structure protection - or all the above.

CAL FIRE has identified the following shortfalls inhibiting the Department from meeting the wildfire preparedness and mitigation needs of the State as outlined in Key Action item 2.6 of the Governor's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan:

- Additional Data Analyst staff for developing, organizing, maintaining, and publishing a CWPP Best Practices Guide; and to ensure coordination, outreach, and advisement across California for the public, local agencies, and non-governmental organizations. Training to all stakeholders would need to be ongoing and occur Statewide. There is also a need to develop and maintain a process for tracking and displaying CWPPs for public viewing.

CAL FIRE Management Activity Project Planning and Event Reporter

CAL FIRE has the critical need to collect, manage, and distribute information systematically across its fuel reduction and forest improvement programs. Projects are funded through several State and federal funding mechanisms and administered by various Departmental programs and collaborating partner entities Statewide. The CAL FIRE Management Activity Project Planning and Event Reporter (CalMAPPER) is the Department's mechanism to capture spatial data and project activity information. This information can then be distributed to internal or external stakeholders for purposes of planning, accountability, management, and emergency response.

This centralized database contains a spatial GIS component to facilitate and produce maps and monitor past and present project activities. The database can be utilized to assist in the planning of future project activities and is readily available to emergency responders and environmental planners. Spatial information can assist program managers and reviewers in assessing all CAL FIRE activities, as well as other pertinent

data (e.g., wildfire perimeters, Statewide roads, topography, vegetation) collectively to better understand the combined effects on natural and infrastructure resources. The common framework increases coordination and effectiveness across programs within CAL FIRE in support of the Department's mission, goals, and objectives of the 2018 Plan.

Currently, there are no dedicated full-time positions to manage CalMAPPER. There is a critical need for oversight of the program to ensure consistency in data collection, policy and procedure development, quality assurance/quality control, and reporting. Additional coordination of data collection and reporting within the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA), other State agencies, federal forest agencies, and other entities conducting fuel reduction projects within California is critical to California reaching its one million acres goal by 2025. Maintaining and enhancing existing reporting tools to capture fuels reduction work and develop new tools is necessary to streamline data collection and reporting processes. This can only be accomplished by fulltime staff working on CalMAPPER.

CAL FIRE has identified the following shortfalls inhibiting the Department from meeting the wildfire preparedness and mitigation needs of the State as outlined in Key Action items 2.9, 2.10, 2.11 and 4.8 of the Governor's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan:

- A program manager to ensure effective management, direction, oversight, and consistent leadership of the CalMAPPER program. A Deputy Chief would be the desirable level when interacting with and providing reports to federal, State, and local agencies, CNRA departments, CAL FIRE executives, the Board, the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force, and other stakeholders.
- Additional staff to focus on specific subject matter expertise in areas such as user and data entry guides, Statewide training for all programs, and quality control without relying heavily on other programs within CAL FIRE to assist. CalMAPPER requests and guidelines continue to evolve annually, which has increased the amount of time and expertise required to review data effectively and efficiently.
- An additional Analyst to assist in the development of user and data entry guides, provide technical support, receive, and analyze public and departmental requests, develop responses, and ensure accurate and timely reporting; as well as provide analytical and technical support to program management, Regions, and Units to ensure consistent reporting across all programs.

CALIFORNIA INCIDENT DATA AND STATISTICS PROGRAM

The California Incident Data and Statistics (CalStats) Program is a Statewide emergency incident data collection program that analyzes and distributes statistical information reported by the fire service throughout the State. This includes collecting National Fire Incident Reporting System data from the fire service in California on behalf of the United States Fire Administration. The CalStats Program allows the State Fire Marshal to comply with HSC 13110.5 to provide statistical information on all fires, medical aid incidents, and hazardous materials incidents occurring within the State. While the Program was not statutorily placed under the Deputy Director of Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation, based on the Program's responsibilities the Office felt it was appropriate to include it within the Division.

Additionally, the CalStats Program prepares and publishes an annual Wildfire Activity Statistics report. This report is a statistical record of wildfire incidents responded to by CAL FIRE personnel and resources, performing the State/CAL FIRE mission, using State funding within the CAL FIRE Direct Protection Area. The Wildfire Activity Statistics report is more commonly referred to as the Redbook.

CAL FIRE has not identified any current shortfalls to meet the mandate of HSC 13110.5.

LAND USE PLANNING PROGRAM

CAL FIRE's Land Use Planning Program assists local agencies (cities and counties) throughout California as they address the unreasonable risk from wildfire by planning for new development in the SRA and very high FHSZs in the LRAs. Program staff works collaboratively with local agencies and CAL FIRE Units on topics ranging from safety elements of general plans, subdivision review for compliance with AB 2911 (Chapter 641, Statutes of 2018), and assisting communities to become recognized through the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) Firewise USA® (Firewise) recognition program.

Safety Elements

The Wildfire Hazard Legislation Safety Element Planning and Zoning Law requires that cities and counties adopt a comprehensive General Plan with various elements including a safety element for protection of the community from unreasonable risks associated with various hazards, including wildfires (GOV 65302.5). CAL FIRE has a long history of knowing the importance of planning and its impact on wildland fire safety and risk mitigation. Land use planning incorporates safety element requirements for SRA and very high FHSZ; requires local general plan safety elements, upon the next revision of the housing element on or after January 1, 2014, to be reviewed and updated as necessary to address the risk of wildfire in the SRA and very high FHSZs; requires each safety element update to take into account the most recent version of the Office of Planning and Research's (OPR) "Fire Hazard Planning" document; and requires OPR to include a reference to the provisions of SB 1241 (Chapter 311, Statutes of 2012), as well as any other materials related to fire hazards or fire safety deemed appropriate for reference.

Currently, CAL FIRE's Land Use Planning Program staff assist 56 counties with the SRA and 189 cities with very high FHSZ in the LRA with updates to their safety element and additional wildfire preparedness and mitigation measures. The requirements of AB 642 and SB 63 will increase the number of local agencies impacted by the LRA FHSZ maps and the number of local agencies the OSFM assists in the FHSZ map adoption process and safety element update. CAL FIRE anticipates the number of local agencies needing assistance with wildfire preparedness and mitigation measures will significantly increase to well over 400 jurisdictions, with many more local agencies having very high FHSZs than previously. With more local agencies having increasingly very high FHSZ, additional staffing is needed to provide technical consultation with their safety element.

CAL FIRE has identified the following shortfalls inhibiting the Department from meeting the statutory requirements of PRC 4209.1 and 4209.5 by establishing the Community Wildfire Mitigation Assistance Program and providing technical consultation to the

additional local agencies with very high FHSZs who will now require their safety element to be reviewed:

- Additional supervisory staff to provide oversight and coordination of the Land Use Planning Program and the new staff needed to provide technical consultation to the additional local agencies with very high FHSZs now requiring review of their safety element. Supervisory staff is also needed to provide training to staff to ensure they have the technical knowledge necessary to assist the local agencies.
- Additional staff to provide technical consultation to the additional local agencies needing assistance with updating their safety element and additional wildfire preparedness and mitigation measures, focusing on the most vulnerable local agencies and communities. Staff is needed to provide a singular point of contact to each of the additional local agencies with very high FHSZs for all aspects of wildfire preparedness and mitigation.
- Additional Analyst staff to aid the additional and existing Land Use Planning Program staff and the additional local agencies needing technical consultation.

Subdivision Review

AB 2911 added PRC 4290.5, which requires the Board, in consultation with the State Fire Marshal and local agencies, to identify existing subdivisions with more than 30 dwelling units located in the SRA or LRA very high FHSZ without a secondary egress route that are at significant wildfire risk. Additionally, the Board, in consultation with the State Fire Marshal and the local agency that identified the subdivisions, must develop recommendations to improve the subdivision's fire safety.

After PRC 4290.5 came into effect, CAL FIRE requested and received five staff to implement the new requirements of the statute. However, the Subdivision Review Program has already identified over 1,800 preexisting subdivisions that meet the requirements of PRC 4290.5 with additional subdivisions to be identified Statewide. Additionally, upon the five year review, additional new subdivisions will be added to the list of subdivisions that meet the requirements of PRC 4290.5. Since the inception of the Subdivision Review Program and the potential for new subdivisions to be added, additional staffing is needed to meet the actual workload of the program.

CAL FIRE has identified the following shortfalls inhibiting the Department from meeting the statutory requirements of PRC 4290.5 and the State as outlined in Key Action item 2.24 of the Governor's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan:

- Additional staff to ensure compliance with timeframes prescribed in PRC 4290.5 to survey local governments, including counties, cities, and fire districts. These positions are needed to be the initial point of contact for the program and would work closely with local agencies and the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, as well as provide direct inputs into various reporting methods for Department staff and stakeholders.

State Minimum Fire Safe Regulations

PRC 4290 and its associated regulation (CCR Title 14 § 1270-1276.04), known as the State Minimum Fire Safe Regulations (FSR), were first adopted by the Board in September of 1991 in response to the growing risk to structures from wildfire. Over time its purpose has evolved to establishing minimum wildfire protection standards in conjunction with building, construction, and development in the SRA and, after July 1, 2021, the very high FHSZs in the LRA.

CAL FIRE is tasked with ensuring compliance with the FSRs in the SRA. This responsibility has recently been renewed with the creation of PRC 4209.1 via AB 9. Currently, and for the past 30+ years, this responsibility has resided with each CAL FIRE Unit and the six Contract Counties with technical support from the Land Use Planning Program. The Land Use Planning Program will continue this support in the SRA and look ahead to supporting local jurisdictions in the LRA.

CAL FIRE has identified the following shortfalls inhibiting the Department from meeting the statutory requirements of PRC 4290 in the SRA and AB 9 by establishing the Community Wildfire Mitigation Assistance Program and providing technical consultation with cities and counties, particularly those that are most vulnerable to wildfire risk:

- Additional positions to provide technical consultation and adequately provide FSR support to CAL FIRE Units, Contract Counties, and local agencies with an emphasis on the most vulnerable communities. These are critical positions needed at the CAL FIRE Unit level to ensure that additional communities and development needed to meet the State's housing needs are built to wildfire safe standards, preparing these communities to safely withstand future wildfires.

Firewise USA

The Firewise Program is administered by NFPA and provides a collaborative framework to help neighbors in a geographic area get organized, find direction, and take action to increase the ignition resistance of their homes and community and to reduce wildfire risks

at the local level. The Firewise Program is a part of California's efforts to ensure communities are prepared against wildfire, and the Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Division works to assist local communities in receiving this designation.

Each state that participates in the Firewise Program is represented by a State Liaison. The State Liaisons are appointed by the State Forestry/Fire Agency to serve as the point of contact in their state. In California, this position is held by the Deputy Chief of the Land Use Planning Program, within the Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Division. Due to the size and complexity of California, technical assistance to communities and administration of the program is divided amongst all Land Use Planning Program staff.

In 2019, California was third in the nation with just over 200 recognized communities. However, due to the nature of the wildfire issue in California, the State now leads the nation with over 600 recognized Firewise communities, more than a quarter of all those in the program nationwide. This drastic increase in the popularity of the program has put a strain on the Land Use Planning Program staff's ability to keep up with the demand for technical assistance and administration of the program.

CAL FIRE has identified the following shortfalls inhibiting the Department from meeting the statutory requirements of AB 9 and the needs of the State as outlined in Key Action item 2.15 of the Governor's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan:

- Additional staff to take on the role of State Liaison and ensure there is effective management, direction, oversight, and consistent leadership. An Assistant Chief is the desirable level for this position and would provide updates and reports to CAL FIRE executives, stakeholders, California's Wildfire and Forest and Resilience Task Force, the Board, other governmental entities, and agencies.
- Additional staff to focus on specific subject matter expertise in areas such as assisting local communities with the process and procedures of gaining Firewise recognition.

WILDFIRE PREVENTION GRANTS PROGRAM

CAL FIRE's Wildfire Prevention Grants Program is governed by PRC § 4124 to provide funding for fire prevention projects and activities in and near wildfire threatened communities that focus on increasing the protection of people, structures, and communities. Funded activities include hazardous fuel reduction, wildfire prevention planning, and wildfire prevention education with an emphasis on improving public health and safety while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The Strategic Fire Plan for California serves as the roadmap for project development. Projects are evaluated based on the overall benefit to reduce the threat of wildfires to people, structures, and communities. CAL FIRE considers the wildfire hazards and risks of an area, the geographic balance of projects, and whether the project is complementary to other fire prevention or forest health activities when awarding grants. Disadvantaged and low-income communities as defined by AB 1550 (Chapter 369, Statutes of 2016), projects that demonstrate a carbon benefit by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and projects that contain matching funds will receive additional priority. Projects are selected on a competitive basis and consecutive awards are not guaranteed.

In addition to the competitive solicitation grant program, contracts and direct award grants are used to fund specific needs, research, and priority projects. Some of the direct award funded projects include:

- Contract with California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo to evaluate the greenhouse gas impacts of California Climate Investment (CCI) Wildfire Prevention Grant Program projects using the approved CCI Quantification Methodology.
- The National Institute of Standards and Technology Structure Separation Experiment that is examining the complex relationship of structure-to-structure fire spread as a significant contributor to WUI conflagrations.
- University of California Cooperative Extension to create a new fire outreach and extension program consisting of Fire Advisors located in selected counties.
- California Fire Safe Council
 - To build capacity in each county by funding a County Coordinator position to educate, encourage, and develop countywide community collaboration and coordination among various wildfire mitigation groups operating within each county.
 - To support increased community fire resiliency through defensible space assistance grants to improve compliance with defensible space requirements by assisting the elderly, low-income residents, and people with disabilities to comply with those requirements.

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- For the identification of evacuation route standards, plans, and the creation and maintenance, and signage of evacuation routes used during emergencies.
- Community Wildfire Planning Center
 - Development and delivery of a Land Use Planner training curriculum to train local planners on land use planning issues in the WUI.
 - To create a user-friendly toolkit to help communities in California successfully develop and implement a CWPP. The toolkit will assist the local agency in meeting State and federal requirements.
- OPR to inventory and publish a WUI best practices guide reflecting local planning ordinances and enforcement practices undertaken at the local level in the WUI.

The CAL FIRE Wildfire Prevention Grants Program is an immensely popular grant program that provides critical funding needed to implement preparedness and mitigation projects. However, the grant program is oversubscribed with the amount of funding requested versus the amount of funding available. Below is a table illustrating the fiscal need to implement these critical projects. CAL FIRE recommends increasing the funding for the Wildfire Prevention Grants Program to an amount commensurate with the need. This will aid the State in reaching its fuel reduction goal of 500,000 acres annually by 2025.

Wildfire Prevention Grant Program Funding Available versus Requested					
Fiscal Year	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Funding Available	78,799,645	43,237,946	43,805,747	137,751,996	117,609,265
Funding Requested	146,651,255	185,933,089	208,618,464	353,938,108	242,158,718
Funding Oversubscribed	67,851,610	142,695,143	164,812,717	216,186,112	124,549,453

The Wildfire Prevention Grants Program is currently managing approximately \$421 million in awarded funds with an additional \$120 million appropriated in fiscal year 22/23 and an additional \$117 million to be allocated next fiscal year 23/24. The grants are awarded on a multi-year basis, which requires additional staff work with each Fiscal Year's cycle. These cycles compound over time and increase the workload substantially with each cycle. The Wildfire Prevention Grants Program is managing grants from FY 2017 to present. When the SRA Fire Prevention Fee was suspended and replaced by CCI funding, the funding for grants went from an average of about \$10 million annually to an average of about \$120 million annually. This significant increase is still being managed by the same number of staff from the original SRA Fire Prevention Fee Program. Additional workload and expectations have been added to the Wildfire Prevention Grants Program since its original inception. This program cannot be sustained at the pace and scale needed without additional staff and funding.

CAL FIRE has identified the following shortfalls inhibiting the Department from meeting the wildfire preparedness and mitigation needs of the State as outlined in Key Action items 2.11 and 2.13 of the Governor’s Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan:

- Staff to manage all direct award contracts and grants with cooperating entities conducting research, developing mitigation guidance and tools, and implementing program funding directly for the Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Division. Primary points of contact are needed for each entity, ensuring compliance with the contract or grant agreement scope of work and requirements.
- Staff to ensure that progress reports are submitted timely and accurately, process advance payment invoices, invoices for payment, and provide all required reporting of project funding overseen by the Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Division per the CNRA, Legislature, and Administration.
- An annual appropriation to continue the Defensible Space Assistance Program established by AB 74 (Chapter 23, Statutes of 2019) to improve compliance with defensible space requirements by assisting the elderly, low-income residents, and people with disabilities to comply with those requirements.
- Auditors to ensure CAL FIRE is complying with State requirements for the grant programs it administers, and grantees are complying with the requirements of the grant programs. CAL FIRE is managing around a billion dollars in grant funding. This would ensure the State’s investment in wildfire preparedness and mitigation and forest resilience are being implemented as mandated.
- Staff to assist the Wildfire Prevention Grants Program at the Unit level in the administrative oversight of grant projects. They would work directly with grantees to validate work performed, ensure fuels treatment project data is entered into CalMAPPER accurately, and validate invoices for payment. They would also assist grantees with ensuring compliance with the CEQA, NEPA, and other requirements for the projects.
- Staff to provide additional oversight of the Wildfire Prevention Grants Program at the Region level. They would work directly with Unit staff and the grantees to ensure quarterly progress reports and invoices are submitted timely and accurately, and invoices for payment are accurate, validated, and entered into FI\$Cal timely and correctly. They would also assist in the audit of grantees when potential malfeasance is determined.
- An annual appropriation to the Wildfire Prevention Grants Program to ensure the funding available to wildfire preparedness and mitigation projects is commensurate with the demand.

SUMMARY OF KNOWN PERSONNEL AND RESOURCE SHORTFALLS

The Office of the State Fire Marshal's Community Wildfire Mitigation and Preparedness Division has recognized the following known personnel and resource shortfalls:

- **Defensible Space Inspection Program**
 - Staff to act as leads for the Defensible Space Program at the Unit level and supervise the Forestry Technicians and Forestry Aides, coordinate defensible space inspections within each Unit and amongst cooperating agencies, and perform defensible space inspections in accordance with PRC 4291, CCR Title 14 § 1299, CIV1102.19, and the new ember-resistant zone established by AB 3074.
 - Staff to perform defensible space inspections in accordance with PRC 4291, CCR Title 14 § 1299, Civil Code 1102.19, and the new ember-resistant zone established by AB 3074.
 - Additional ongoing appropriation is needed to fund the current 94.5 DSIs from the Fire STEPP BCP for a full 9-months every year.
 - Additional ongoing funding for data collection licenses and applications.
- **Burn Permit Program**
 - Additional positions for ongoing program administrative and technical support for both the public and CAL FIRE staff. Based on the actual workload of developing and maintaining the online application and database, two positions are needed to meet the additional workload.
- **California Wildfire Mitigation Financial Assistance Program**
 - CAL FIRE received additional positions to administer the California Wildfire Mitigation Financial Assistance Program with Cal OES. However, CAL FIRE did not receive permanent ongoing funding for the three positions from AB 38 and the expenditure date for the initial funding ended on June 30, 2023. An additional annual appropriation is needed to fund these positions ongoing.
 - Currently, GOV 8654.10(c) has a sunset date of July 1, 2025, and as of this date, the article is repealed. The sunset date should be removed to continue this critical program beyond July 1, 2025.
 - Additional staff to accomplish the additional workload created by the expansion of this important program. The addition of the pilot communities increased the need for support of outreach and education initiatives. This position would also provide technical support and coordination in the field for the assessment application and for training local assessors to evaluate properties within the project areas in a consistent and efficient manner. These positions would also

- assist in the planning and organization at the program level, working to create and write reports and presentations for management and the public.
 - Additional ongoing funding for Cal OES is needed for the expansion of the California Wildfire Mitigation Financial Assistance Program to more communities throughout the State and at the pace and scale needed.
 - Additional ongoing funding to CAL FIRE for research grants to continue work with the Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety, National Institute of Standards and Technology, and other partners to improve home hardening research and guidance.
- **Utility Wildfire Mitigation Program**
 - Additional funding to ensure there is effective management, direction, oversight, and consistent leadership of the Utility Wildfire Mitigation Program. Upgrading the existing position to a position is more suitable when interacting with high level representatives with federal, State, and local agencies, as well as outside organizations and electrical corporation executives.
 - An additional position to enable staff to further focus on specific subject matter expertise areas within the WMP reviews without relying as heavily on other outside programs within CAL FIRE during the review process. As the wildfire mitigation plan guidelines continue to evolve annually, it has increased the amount of material and expertise required to consult in the review effectively and efficiently with Energy Safety each year.
 - An annual appropriation to fund a contracted electrical engineer who will provide subject matter expertise when developing test plans for electrical corporations or manufacturers seeking equipment exemptions and validating the test results prior to approving an equipment exemption from PRC 4292. This will further improve the goal of reducing utility-related wildfires.
- **Fire Hazard Severity Zones**
 - Additional legal counsel is needed to provide guidance and legal advice to navigate the legal complexities required for the regulatory adoption and implementation of FHSZs. Legal counsel would review and provide recommendations to the program on all laws and regulations applicable and provide recommendations. The position would also provide legal counsel for all programs in Goal 2 of the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan for the Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Division.
 - Additional staff to assist in the development of regulatory packages, receive and analyze public comments, develop responses, and ensure the public is noticed through the adoption process. The position would also provide analytical and technical support to program management, Units, and local agencies related to the adoption process.

- Additional staff to assist in the development, review, and adoption of the FHSZ maps. The position would develop tools for CAL FIRE and local agency map review to track comments and create maps for regulatory adoption. The position would also maintain maps and web viewers on the internet for public viewing.
- **Unit Fire Plans**
 - Additional staff to oversee and coordinate the development and implementation of risk modeling and fuels reduction project planning tools to implement a scientific and consistent method for prioritizing projects. This position would assist the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection with updates to the Strategic Fire Plan for California and provide annual reports to the Board, Legislature, and executive staff. The position would also update Unit Fire Plan templates to accurately address changes in the Strategic Fire Plan for California and update policy and procedures.
 - Additional staff for the continued evolution of the Unit Fire Plan, to prioritize Unit fuel treatment projects, coordinate projects with cooperating entities, ensure environmental compliance, and execute those treatments. These positions would provide oversight and support of all grant projects being implemented within the Unit by outside entities, and ensure all fuels projects completed or funded by CAL FIRE are reported timely and accurately in the Department's fuels treatment database. This work would assist the State in achieving its goal of treating 500,000 acres annually by 2025.
 - Additional Data Analyst staff to provide Geographic Information System (GIS) support for projects completed or funded by CAL FIRE to ensure they are reported timely and accurately in the Department's fuels treatment database. These positions would assist partner agencies to meet the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force's need for improving joint reporting capabilities across multiple entities. Specific duties would include database management and quality control to maintain authoritative information on fuels reduction and forest resilience projects and activities. In addition, these positions would conduct data summary and reporting, respond to data requests, and implement changes to meet new reporting requirements. Other duties would include scripting and automation for data entry, as well as support for web map applications.
 - Additional staff to assist in the planning and implementation of Unit fuel treatment projects. These positions would ensure environmental compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and other requirements for projects implemented or funded by CAL FIRE within the Unit. The positions would also conduct pre and post monitoring of prescribed fire and other types of fuel reduction projects to

- evaluate project effectiveness and ecological outcomes. This work would support CAL FIRE and the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force's understanding of the effectiveness of vegetation management treatments and the goal of treating 500,000 acres annually by 2025.
- **Community Wildfire Protection Plans**
 - Additional staff responsible for developing, organizing, maintaining, and publishing a CWPP Best Practices Guide. This position would ensure coordination, outreach, and advisement across California for the public, local agency, and non-governmental organizations. This position would also provide ongoing training to all stakeholders Statewide. This position would also develop and maintain a process for tracking and displaying CWPPs for public viewing.
 - **CAL FIRE Management Activity Project Planner and Event Reporter**
 - Additional staff to ensure effective management, direction, oversight, and consistent leadership of the CalMAPPER program. The additional supervisorial staff is at the desirable level when interacting with and providing reports to federal, State, and local agencies, CNRA departments, CAL FIRE executives, the Board, the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force, and other stakeholders.
 - Additional staff to enable CalMAPPER staff to focus on specific subject matter expertise in areas such as user and data entry guides, Statewide training for all programs, and quality control without relying heavily on other programs within CAL FIRE to assist. CalMAPPER requests and guidelines continue to evolve annually, which has increased the amount of time and expertise required to review data effectively and efficiently.
 - Additional Analyst staff to assist in the development of user and data entry guides, provide technical support, receive and analyze public and departmental requests, develop responses, and ensure accurate and timely reporting. This position would also provide analytical and technical support to program management, Regions, and Units to ensure consistent reporting across all programs.
 - **Safety Element**
 - Additional supervisorial staff to provide oversight and coordination of the Land Use Planning Program and new staff needed to provide technical consultation with the additional local agencies with very high FHSZs now requiring review of their safety element. This position would provide training to staff to ensure they have the technical knowledge necessary to assist the local agencies.
 - Additional staff to provide technical consultation to the additional local agencies needing assistance with updating their safety element and additional wildfire preparedness and mitigation measures, focusing on the most vulnerable local agencies and communities. This position would provide a singular point of

- contact to each of the additional local agencies with very high FHSZs for all aspects of wildfire preparedness and mitigation.
- Additional Analyst staff to aid the additional and existing Land Use Planning Program staff and the additional local agencies needing technical consultation.
- **Subdivision Review**
 - Additional positions to ensure compliance with timeframes prescribed in PRC 4290.5 to survey local governments, including counties, cities, and fire districts. These positions would be the initial point of contact for the program and would work closely with local governments and the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection in order to provide direct inputs into various reporting methods for Department staff and stakeholders.
- **State Minimum Fire Safe Regulations**
 - Additional positions to adequately provide FSR support to CAL FIRE Units, Contract Counties, and local agencies with an emphasis on the most vulnerable communities. This is a critical position needed at the CAL FIRE Unit level to ensure that additional communities and developments needed to meet the State's housing needs are built to wildfire safe standards, preparing these communities to safely withstand wildfires of the future.
- **Firewise USA**
 - Additional staff to take on the role of State Liaison and would ensure there is effective management, direction, oversight, and consistent leadership. Supervisorial staff would be the appropriate level to provide updates and reports to CAL FIRE executives, stakeholders, California's Wildfire and Forest and Resilience Task Force, the Board, other governmental entities, and agencies.
 - Additional positions to enable Firewise Program staff to focus on specific subject matter expertise in areas such as assisting local communities with the process and procedures of gaining Firewise recognition.
- **Wildfire Prevention Grants Program**
 - An additional manager to manage all direct award contracts and grants with cooperating entities conducting research, developing mitigation guidance and tools, and implementing program funding directly for the Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Division. This position would serve as the primary point of contact with each entity, ensuring compliance with the contract or grant agreement scope of work and requirements.
 - An additional Analyst is needed to ensure the progress reports are submitted timely and accurately, and to process advance payment invoices, invoices for payment, and provide all required reporting of project funding overseen by the Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Division per the CNRA, Legislature, and Administration.

- An annual appropriation to continue the Defensible Space Assistance Program established by AB 74 (Chapter 23, Statutes of 2019) to improve compliance with defensible space requirements by assisting the elderly, low-income residents, and people with disabilities to comply with those requirements.
- Additional auditors to ensure the Department is complying with State requirements for the grant programs it administers and grantees are complying with the requirements of the grant programs. CAL FIRE is managing around a billion dollars in grant funding. This would help ensure the State's investment in wildfire preparedness and mitigation and forest resilience are being implemented as mandated.
- Additional staff to assist the Wildfire Prevention Grants Program at the Unit level in the administrative oversight of grant projects. These positions would work directly with grantees to validate work performed, ensure fuels treatment project data is entered into CalMAPPER accurately, and validate invoices for payment. They would also assist grantees with ensuring compliance with the CEQA, NEPA, and other requirements for the projects.
- Additional Analysts to provide additional oversight of the Wildfire Prevention Grants Program at the Region level. They would work directly with Unit staff and the grantees to ensure quarterly progress reports and invoices are submitted timely and accurately, and invoices for payment are accurate, validated, and entered into FI\$Cal timely and correctly. They would also assist in the audit of grantees when potential malfeasance is determined.
- An annual appropriation to the Wildfire Prevention Grants Program to ensure the funding available to wildfire preparedness and mitigation projects is commensurate with the demand.