



LEAGUE OF
CALIFORNIA
CITIES

Strengthening California Cities
through Advocacy and Education

Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map Changes

Moderator:

Alex Hamilton, President, Fire Chiefs Department and Fire Chief, Oxnard

Presenters:

Daniel Berlant, Acting State Fire Marshal, CAL Fire

Jim McDougald, Staff Chief, CAL Fire

Michael Peterson, Deputy Commissioner on Climate and Sustainability,
California Department of Insurance

Housekeeping Notes

- This session is being recorded.
- Attendees are muted.
- Question and Answer is available throughout the webinar.
- To write in a question, select the Q&A button on your tool bar.
- Following the presentation, the recording and slides will be shared with attendees.



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Speakers

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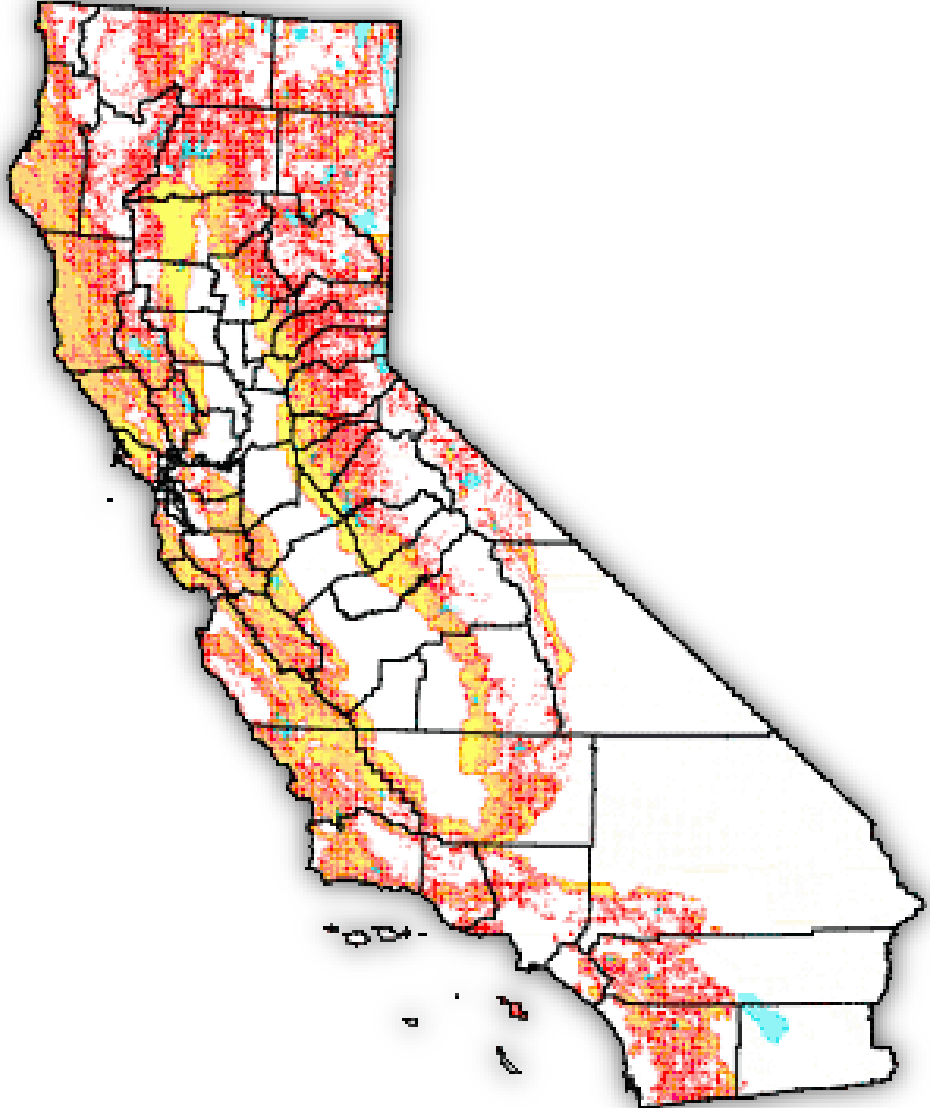
CAL FIRE

Office of the State Fire Marshal

Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Division

March 27, 2023

Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ)



What are the Zones?

- ❑ The maps are required by law
- ❑ Maps Hazard not “RISK”
- ❑ Identify levels of fire hazard
- ❑ 3 levels (Moderate, High, & Very High)

Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ)

Remap Objectives:

- ❑ Update the scientific factors that determine the hazard ratings including new local climate data and improved fire spread modeling.
- ❑ Provide opportunity for validation in the modeling
- ❑ Publish approved State Responsibility Area map
- ❑ Publish and submit Local Responsibility Area maps

Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ)

What is the map for?

- ❑ Building standards for new construction in the Wildland-Urban Interface
- ❑ Natural hazard real estate disclosure
- ❑ Property development standards such as road widths, water supply and signage
- ❑ Consideration in city and county general plans



Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ)

Why is it important?

		Responsibility Area			
		Local (LRA)	State (SRA)	Federal (FRA)	
Fire Hazard Severity Zones	Existing				
	New				
	Very High	Existing	Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps	Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps	
		Existing	CBC Chapter 7A	CBC Chapter 7A	
		Existing	State Fire Safe Regulations	State Fire Safe Regulations	
		Existing	Defensible Space (GC 51182)	Defensible Space (PRC 4291)	
		Existing	Real Estate Hazard Disclosure	Real Estate Hazard Disclosure	
		Existing	Dspace Real Estate Compliance	Dspace Real Estate Compliance	
		Existing	Subdivision Review	Subdivision Review	
	High	New	FHSZ Maps (AB 642 and SB 63)	Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps	
		New	CBC Chapter 7A (SB 63)	CBC Chapter 7A	
		New	Dspace Real Estate Compliance	State Fire Safe Regulations	
Existing			PRC 4291 Defensible Space		
Existing			Real Estate Hazard Disclosure		
Existing			Dspace Real Estate Compliance		
Existing			Subdivision Review		
Moderate	New	FHSZ Maps (AB 642 and SB 63)	Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps		
	New	CBC Chapter 7A (SB 63) TBD	CBC Chapter 7A		
	Existing		State Fire Safe Regulations		
	Existing		PRC 4291 Defensible Space		
	Existing		Real Estate Hazard Disclosure		
	Existing		Subdivision Review		
	Existing				



How are the Zones Determined

- ❑ Developed using a science-based model that assigns a hazard score based on the factors that influence fire likelihood and fire behavior.
- ❑ Factors:
 - ✓ Fire history
 - ✓ Vegetation
 - ✓ Topography
 - ✓ Climate
 - ✓ Ember production and movement





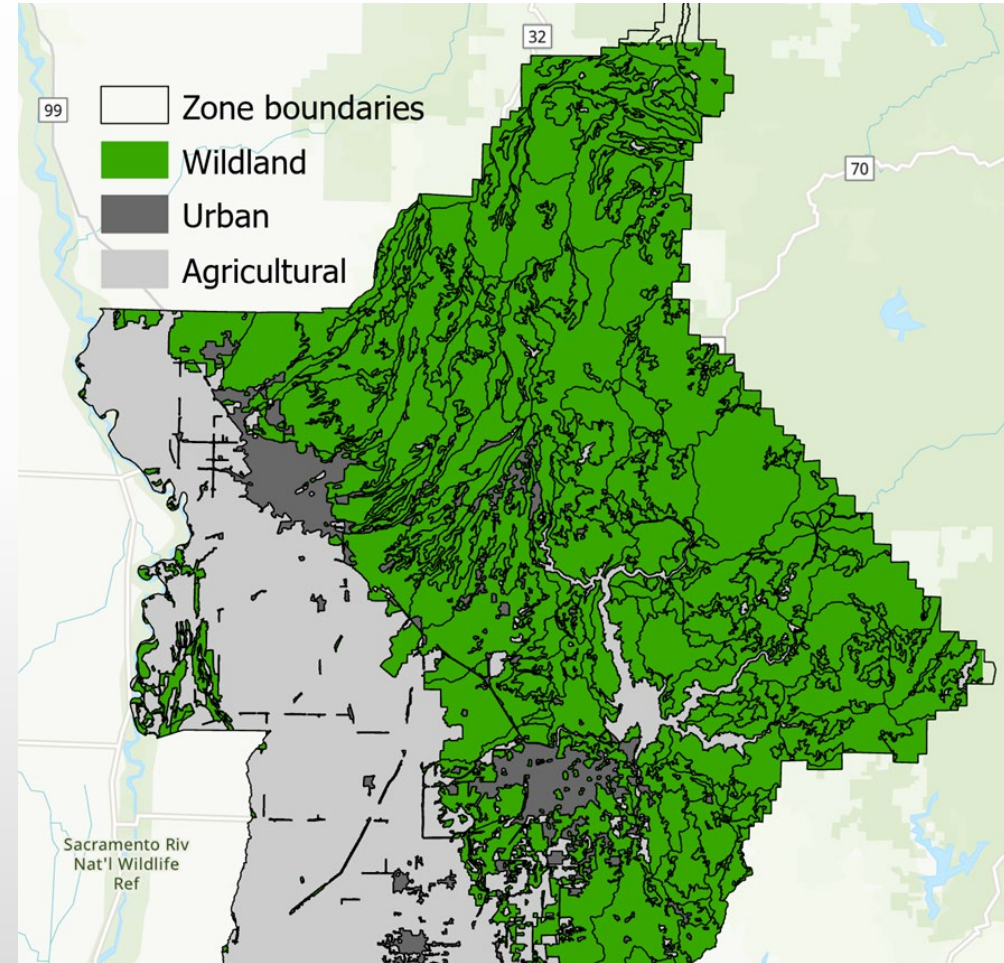
New Updates

- ✓ Updated burn probabilities for wildland areas (inclusive of 2020 fires)
- ✓ Updated fire environment footprints (urban/developed)
- ✓ Updated Vegetation density for urban areas
- ✓ Inclusion of slope in the urban zoning model
- ✓ **Localized fire weather used in both wildland and urban models**
- ✓ **New firebrand production and transport model using discrete local wind vector distributions**

Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ)

Wildland vs. Non-wildland Zones

- ❑ Zones are areas ≥ 200 acres with relatively homogeneous slope and vegetation
- ❑ Hazard map is produced at 30 m resolution
- ❑ Scores are averaged within a zone
- ❑ Wildland is scored independently of urban and agricultural
- ❑ Urban zones scored using additional model steps



Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ)

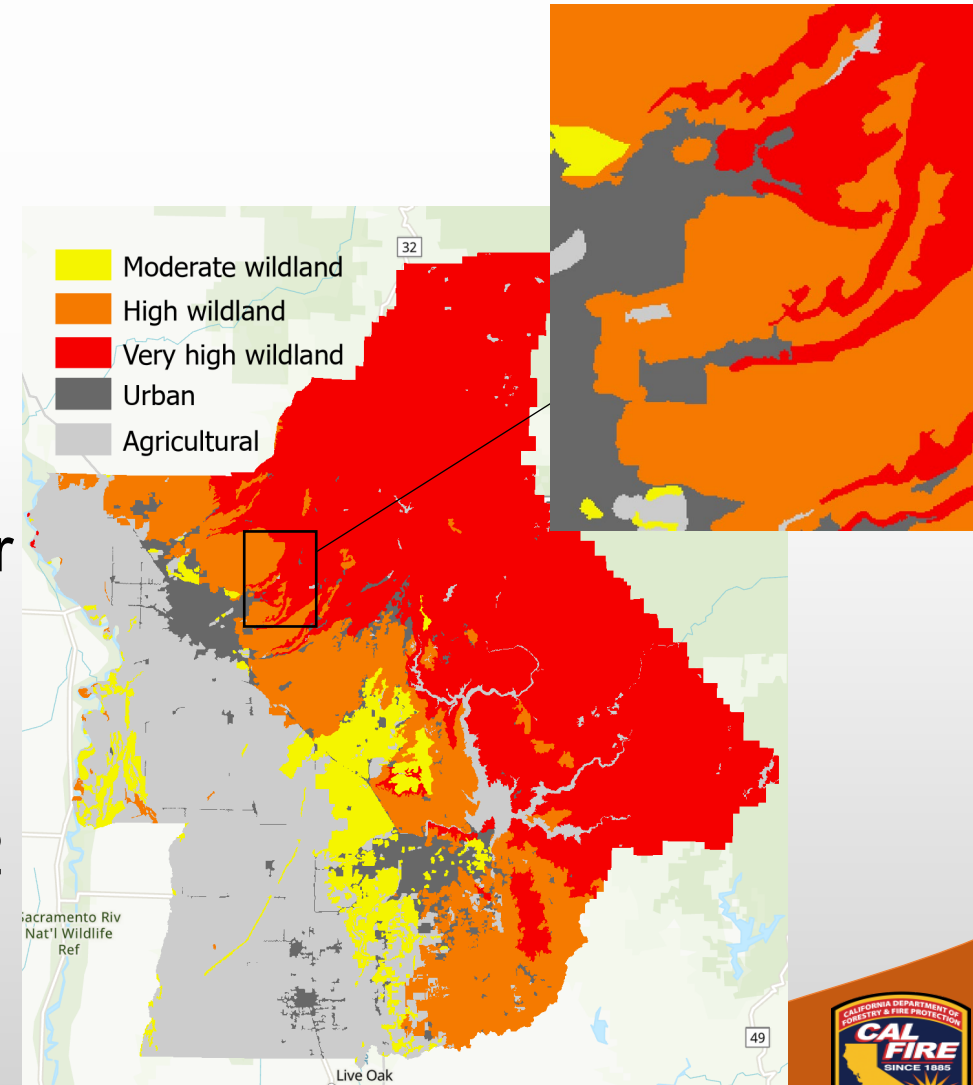
Wildland FHSZ

□ Burn probability

- ✓ Based on fire occurrence from 1991-2020

□ Fire intensity

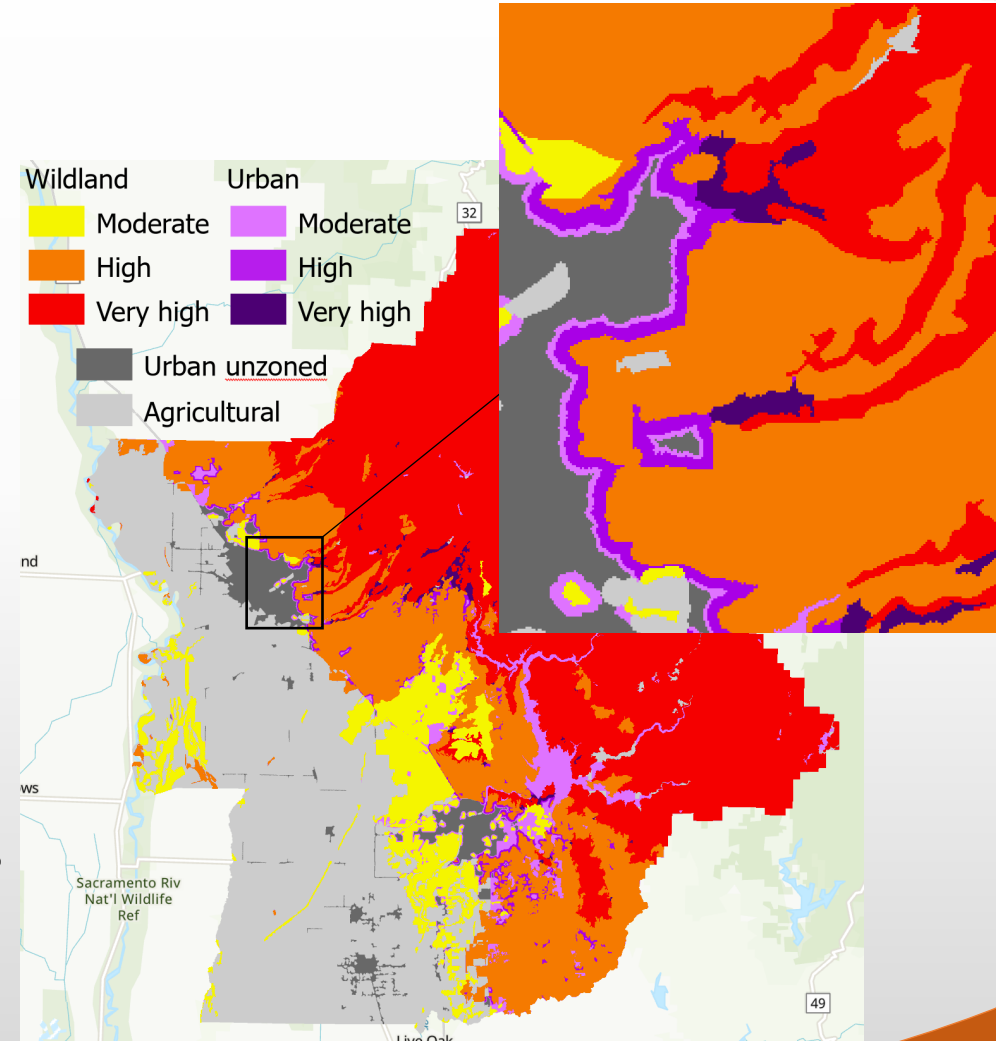
- ✓ Vegetation type (potential; does not account for fuel treatments)
- ✓ Slope
- ✓ Local fire weather – how hot/dry/windy are the worst conditions at a given location (based on 2 km data from 2003-2018)



Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ)

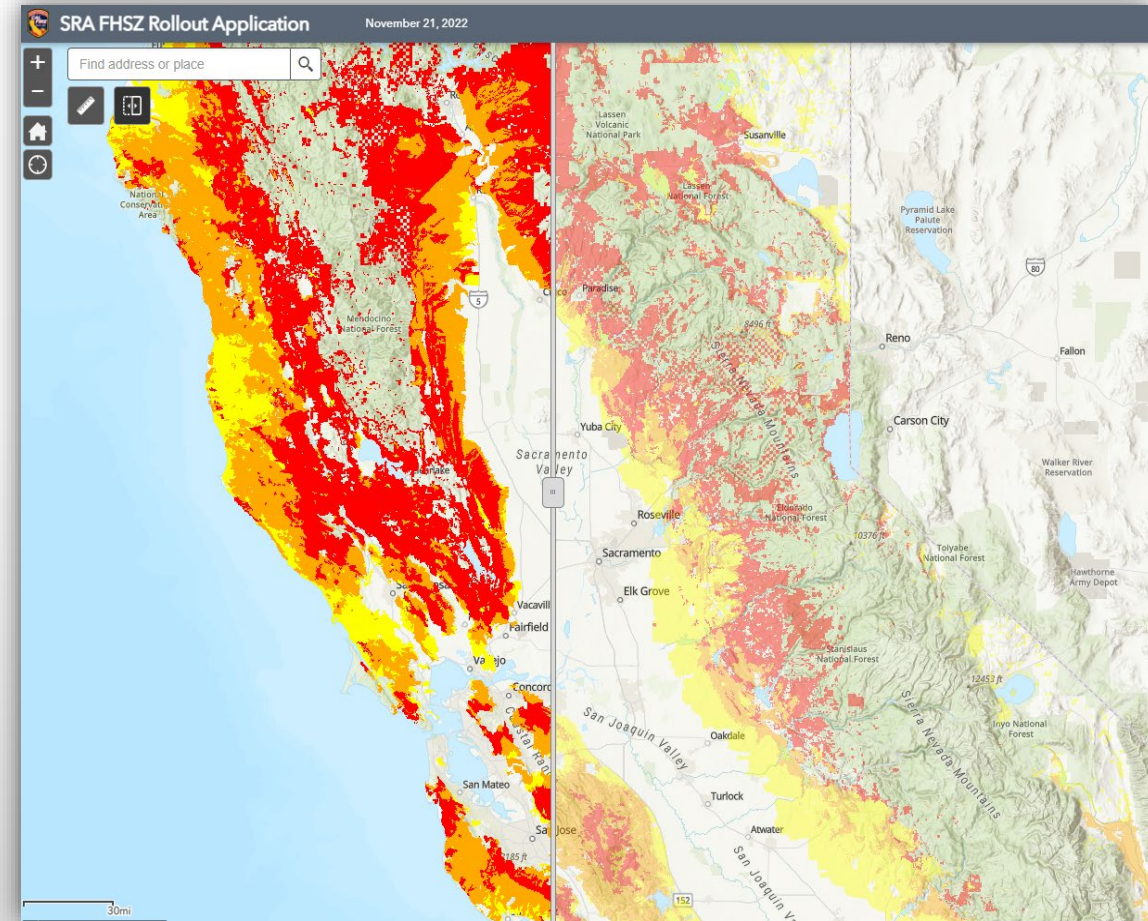
Urban FHSZ

- ❑ Based on distance to wildland and hazard level of adjacent wildland
- ❑ Ember production based on vegetation type and fire weather
- ❑ Ember transport based on wind speed/direction observed under the most extreme fire weather at a given location
- ❑ Width of moderate, high and very high bands in urban based on ember load, urban tree cover and slope
- ❑ All unclassified SRA → Moderate



Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ)

- ❑ CAL FIRE has been working on the update of the FHSZ maps for some time.
 - ✓ Public Comment began on the new regulation December 16, 2022
 - ✓ Public Hearings in each County with SRA completed February 3, 2023
 - ✓ Public Comment ends April 4, 2023
- ❑ The State Responsibility Area (SRA) will be complete first then the Local Responsibility Areas (LRA) later this year.



LRA Adoption Process

- ❑ Will be completed County by County including all Local Jurisdictions within each County
- ❑ 60-day notice prior to start of local review process
 - ❑ Initial meeting to describe process
 - ❑ Set training dates
- ❑ 60-day local review
- ❑ FRAP review of comments
- ❑ Final recommendation submitted to governing body



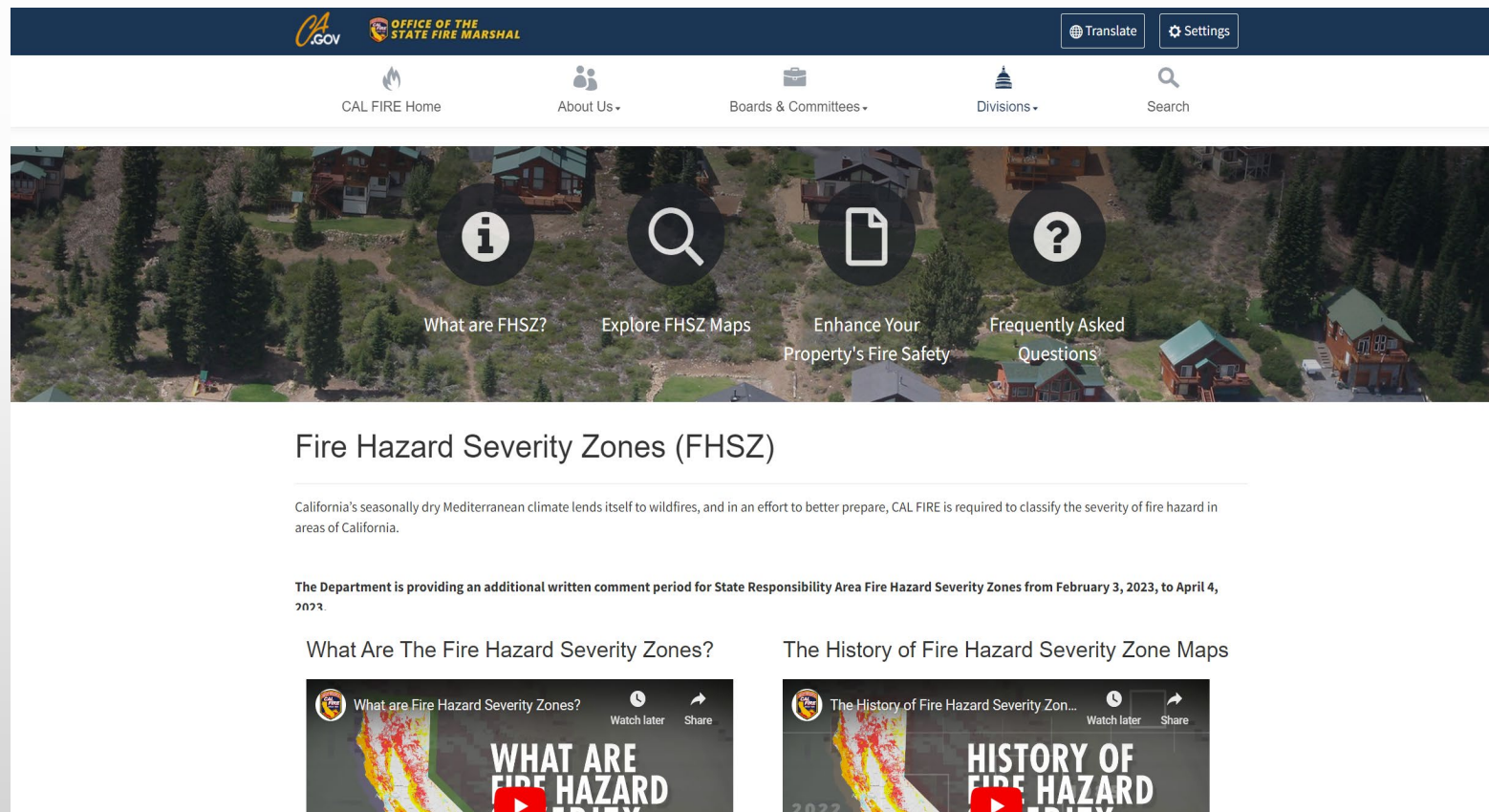


- ❑ City / County has 30 days to set public comment and 120 to adopt through ordinance
- ❑ A local agency may, at its discretion, include areas within the jurisdiction of the local agency, not identified as very high fire hazard severity zones by the State Fire Marshal, as very high fire hazard severity zones.
- ❑ The local agency shall transmit a copy of the adopted ordinance to the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection within 30 days of adoption

Questions?

Web Information:

<https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/fire-hazard-severity-zones>



The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the CAL FIRE website. It includes the CAL FIRE logo, the text "OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL", and utility links for "Translate" and "Settings". Below the navigation bar are icons for "CAL FIRE Home", "About Us", "Boards & Committees", "Divisions", and "Search". The main content area features a large banner with an aerial view of a residential area and four circular icons: an information icon for "What are FHSZ?", a magnifying glass for "Explore FHSZ Maps", a document icon for "Enhance Your Property's Fire Safety", and a question mark for "Frequently Asked Questions". Below the banner is the heading "Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ)" followed by a paragraph explaining that California's climate leads to wildfires and that CAL FIRE classifies fire hazard severity. A notice states that the Department is providing an additional written comment period for State Responsibility Area Fire Hazard Severity Zones from February 3, 2023, to April 4, 2023. At the bottom, there are two video thumbnails: "What Are The Fire Hazard Severity Zones?" and "The History of Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps".



Safer from Wildfires



Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF
Planning and Research



CALIFORNIA
Public Utilities Commission

An interagency partnership between Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara and the emergency response and readiness agencies in Governor Gavin Newsom's administration to protect lives, homes, and businesses by reducing wildfire risk.

Safer from Wildfires in

1

2

3

1 Protecting the structure



- Class-A Fire rated roof
- Maintain a 5 foot ember-resistant zone around a home (including fencing within 5 feet)
- Noncombustible 6 inches at the bottom of exterior walls
- Ember and fire-resistant vents (See Low-Cost Retrofit List, and Chapter 7A)
- Upgraded windows (Double paned or added shutters)
- Enclosed eaves

Safer from Wildfires in

1

2

3

2 Protecting the immediate surroundings



- Cleared vegetation and debris from under decks
- Removal of combustible sheds and other outbuildings from the immediate surroundings of the home, to at least a distance of 30 feet
- Defensible space compliance (including trimming trees, removal of brush and debris from yard, and compliance with state law and local ordinances)

Safer from Wildfires in

1

2

3

3 Working together as a community



- A community should have clearly defined boundary and a local risk assessment in consultation with the local fire district or state fire agency; an identified evacuation route, cleared of vegetative overgrowth, and evacuation plan contingencies; clear funding sources to implement community mitigation activities and meet clear risk reduction goals; and integrated and up-to-date local planning documents pertinent to community wildfire risk.
- Current examples include Fire Risk Reduction Communities designated by the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection and Firewise USA communities in good standing.

Download or view at insurance.ca.gov

Safer from Wildfires in **1** **2** **3**

Safer from Wildfires is an interagency partnership between Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara and the emergency response and readiness agencies in Governor Gavin Newsom's administration to protect lives, homes, and businesses by reducing wildfire risk.

With California experiencing devastating, climate change intensified wildfires, homes and businesses need insurance they can rely on. Commissioner Lara is using every tool available to improve insurance for our communities. Drawing on the direct experience of first responders and the latest research on wildfires, the partnership created a consistent approach to reducing risk with a list of achievable and effective actions to help make existing homes and businesses safer from wildfires. The ultimate goal is protecting consumers by reducing wildfire risk in their communities, making insurance available and affordable for all Californians.

This "ground up" approach for wildfire resilience has three layers of protection — for the structure, the immediate surroundings, and the community — to prevent wildfires from catching and spreading to other homes and businesses in the neighborhood.



Commissioner Lara is working to increase available incentives for wildfire safety. To view the list of insurance companies currently offering discounts visit insurance.ca.gov.

1 Protecting the structure



- Class A fire-rated roof
- Main entry 5-foot ember-resistant zone around a home (including fencing within 5 feet)
- Noncombustible 6 inches at the bottom of exterior walls
- Lumber and fire-resistant vents (See Low Cost Retrofit List, and Chapter 7A)
- Upgraded windows (Double pane or added shutters)
- Enclosed eaves

2 Protecting the immediate surroundings



- Cared vegetation and debris from under decks
- Removal of combustible sheds and other outbuildings from the immediate surroundings of the home, to a least a distance of 30 feet
- Defensible space compliance (including trimming trees, removal of brush and debris from yard, and compliance with state law and local ordinances)

3 Working together as a community



- The Partnership recognizes the benefit of community-wide mitigation plans to where the community has a clearly defined boundary, a local risk assessment in consultation with the local fire district or state fire agency, and clear funding sources to implement community mitigation activities and meet risk reduction goals.
- Current examples include Fire Risk Reduction Communities designed by the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection and Firewise USA communities in good standing.

QUESTIONS



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THANK YOU

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