

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF
VENTURA URGING AMENDMENTS TO AB 3074 (2020) AND REVISIONS TO THE
STATE BOARD OF FORESTRY'S DRAFT EMBER-RESISTANT ZONE 0
REGULATIONS TO RESTORE LOCAL CONTROL, FUNDING, AND FLEXIBLE
IMPLEMENTATION

WHEREAS, the California Legislature enacted Assembly Bill No. 3074 (2020) amending Public Resources Code section 4291 and Government Code section 51182 to establish a mandatory ember-resistant "Zone 0" — the five-foot area surrounding structures in the State Responsibility Area or the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone in the Local Responsibility Area — and directed the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection to adopt implementing regulations by December 31, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the County of Ventura supports science-based wildfire-risk-reduction strategies, including defensible space, home-hardening, and community preparedness programs proven to save lives and property; and

WHEREAS, the Ventura County Fire Protection District maintains one of the State's most comprehensive defensible-space enforcement and building-safety programs, with a 100-foot clearance requirement, progressive building codes, and active Firewise-community participation; and

WHEREAS, despite these achievements, the current draft Zone 0 regulations apply uniformly to all Fire Hazard Severity Zones in communities in State Responsibility Areas and to Local Responsibility Area Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones without regard to local conditions, implementation capacity, or financial feasibility; and

WHEREAS, the proposed regulations would impose an unfunded mandate on local governments — requiring inspection, enforcement, and compliance monitoring of tens of thousands of properties — and would create significant costs for homeowners, many of whom would face expenses of several thousand to tens of thousands of dollars to retrofit properties; and

WHEREAS, the County of Ventura ("County") recognizes that effective wildfire resilience depends on local discretion and regional flexibility, not one-size-fits-all mandates; and

WHEREAS, the County therefore urges that provisions be included in the Zone zero regulations allowing for the development of alternative practices for Zone 0 compliance that take into account local variation, including differences in geography, geology, ecology, city and county ordinances, and architecture.

WHEREAS, the County further supports prioritizing, where feasible, the preservation of fire-adapted native plants, heritage and municipal street trees, and other living vegetation that provides ecological, shade, and soil-stability benefits while not increasing fire spread; and

WHEREAS, the County urges that Fire Hazard Severity Maps established under AB 3074 be subject to local review and refinement, allowing jurisdictions to correct mapping discrepancies and re-evaluate parcels where state designations conflict with verified site data or proven mitigation; and

WHEREAS, overlapping State fire, insurance, and housing regulations are producing unintended economic and housing consequences, including reduced insurance availability, rising premiums, and limits on multi-family or mixed-use redevelopment required to meet State housing mandates; and

WHEREAS, these conflicts underscore the need for coordinated, funded, and locally adaptable wildfire-resilience policy; and

WHEREAS, the County remains committed to collaborating with the State Board of Forestry, the Office of the State Fire Marshal, and the Legislature to develop wildfire-mitigation standards that are practical, equitable, and science-based;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Ventura hereby urges the California Legislature to amend AB 3074 (2020) and the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection to revise the draft Ember-Resistant Zone 0 Defensible-Space Regulations prior to adoption to:

1. Restore local discretion and authority to tailor defensible-space standards and modify Fire Hazard Severity Map designations based on local conditions and verified mitigation; and
2. Ensure adequate State funding for inspection staffing, homeowner assistance, and public-education programs; and
3. Implement phased, regionally adaptable timelines for compliance that align with community capacity and available resources.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the Board shall transmit copies of this Resolution to the Governor of California, the State Fire Marshal, the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, Ventura County's state legislative delegation, and the California State Association of Counties (CSAC).