



LEAGUE OF  
**CALIFORNIA  
CITIES**



**RCRC**  
RURAL COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES  
OF CALIFORNIA



**California Special  
Districts Association**  
*Districts Stronger Together*



**ACWA**  
Association of California Water Agencies



April 16, 2024

The Honorable Diane Papan  
Chair, Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee  
1020 N Street, Room 160  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 2330 (Holden) Endangered Species: Incidental Take: Wildfire Preparedness Activities**  
**Notice of SUPPORT** (As Amended April 1, 2024)

Dear Assemblymember Papan,

On behalf of the League of California Cities, Rural County Representatives of California, California Special Districts Association, Association of California Water Agencies, California Fire Chiefs Association, Fire Districts Association of California, and the California Cattlemen's Association, we are pleased to **support AB 2330 (Holden)**. The bill would develop a voluntary, streamlined process for local agencies to submit wildfire preparedness programs to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and seek approval to avoid, minimize, and mitigate the take of an endangered, threatened, or candidate species, incidental to conducting vegetative management activities in fire hazard severity zones located adjacent to communities.

The size and severity of wildfires in California is increasing due to climate extremes. In California's recorded history, the top eight largest wildfires and the top two most destructive wildfires occurred in the last seven years, and the deadliest wildfire occurred in the last six years. Communities statewide have experienced the catastrophic and devastating impacts of wildfires, and the threat of wildfire on life and property remains for many communities across the state.

Just as the state and federal agencies are responsible for managing lands and preparing and responding to wildfires, local agencies are also responsible for conducting wildfire preparedness activities on Local Responsibility Areas (LRAs) in designated fire hazard severity zones throughout the state. The state has completed a programmatic environmental impact report under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for 20 million acres of State Responsibility Areas (SRAs) with mitigation measures and a streamlined consultation process with environmental permitting agencies, called the California Vegetative Treatment Program (CalVTP). Local agencies, however, do not have a streamlined process for LRAs and have experienced long delays spanning multiple fire seasons when trying to accelerate these types of wildfire preparedness efforts on LRAs.

**AB 2330 would provide local agencies a voluntary, streamlined process that prioritizes wildfire preparedness activities and public safety while upholding environmental laws and permitting authorities.** The bill would require local agencies to provide CDFW under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) with specific information, including the location and type of activities that are planned, that the local agency has complied with CEQA, and any planned environmental mitigation or conservation measures the local agency plans to take as part of the program. CDFW would have 90 days to respond to the local agency with their approval or denial of the program application and should the application be denied, the bill would allow an additional 30 days for both the local agency to address any deficiencies and for CDFW to reevaluate the application. By going through this streamlined process, local agencies will be able to consult with CDFW regarding their proposed program to ensure any potential harm to species can be avoided and environmental mitigation measures are in place for vegetative management activities to occur.

**The bill would ensure continued environmental oversight and communication between local agencies and the state for any approved wildfire preparedness programs.** The bill would require CDFW to issue terms and conditions in an agreement to the local agency, in lieu of a take permit, that includes a 15-day notification to the CDFW prior to activities occurring. This would allow CDFW to respond should any concerns arise to not only minimize or mitigation environmental impacts but avoid a species take through this proactive notification and communication pathway.

**Lastly, the bill would direct CDFW, in consultation with the State Fire Marshal, to overlay existing maps identifying critical habitat within fire hazard severity zones to better identify lands that may be eligible under this program.** By maintaining these maps every five years, local agencies and the state will have a shared understanding of the critical habitat and species CDFW is monitoring and to ensure environmental protections are in place for wildfire preparedness activities to occur.

If local wildfire preparedness activities are not accelerated in LRA areas, the threat of wildfire will continue to pose extreme risk of future catastrophic wildfire events to both communities and the environment. AB 2330 provides a feasible process that maintains CDFW's environmental authorities and oversight while prioritizing wildfire preparedness and public safety.

For these reasons, we **strongly support AB 2330** and respectfully request you aye vote when the bill is heard in the Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee.

As the sponsor of this legislation, please do not hesitate to contact the League of California Cities Environmental Quality Lobbyist Melissa Sparks-Kranz at 916-658-8232 or [msparkskranz@calcities.org](mailto:msparkskranz@calcities.org).

cc: The Honorable Chris R. Holden  
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