



April 18, 2024

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Room 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Assembly Bill 2469 (Committee on Emergency Management) – SUPPORT
As Amended March 21, 2024**

Dear Chair Wicks,

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), we support Assembly Bill 2469, authored by the Assembly Committee on Emergency Management. This measure extends the sunset for the California Wildfire Mitigation Financial Assistance Program, also known as the California Wildfire Mitigation Program (CWMP), from July 1, 2025 to July 1, 2030. RCRC is an association of forty rural California counties and the RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of elected supervisors from each member county.

Numerous studies have shown that retrofitting homes to make them more resistant to the impacts of wildfire, known as home hardening, is an effective way to reduce the risk of ignition in the event of a high severity wildfire. This is particularly effective if home hardening efforts are implemented communitywide and to the highest standards. These retrofits are costly, however, and it can cost several thousands of dollars to harden an existing home to the most fire-resistant standard. Estimates in many of our member counties have shown costs in the range of \$30,000-40,000 to fully fire-harden an older home.

In 2019, Assembly Bill 38 (Wood) included, among other things, a program to aid disadvantaged homeowners in high fire hazard areas with grant funds to help retrofit their homes. The CWMP is currently serving as a pilot and is funding projects right now to aid high-risk residents in fire prone communities with home hardening measures. As with many state programs such as this, the time needed to gain the necessary expertise, identify the most deserving recipients for the grant funds, and complete the process to

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obtain and evaluate bids to complete the work has taken longer than originally anticipated. However, this program is invaluable to vulnerable homeowners in high-risk wildfire areas that may not otherwise afford to complete these home retrofits.

AB 2469 would simply afford the CWMP five extra years to expend its funds and continue working to identify homeowners to receive vital grant assistance from the program. The CWMP is crucial to aiding lower income and elderly homeowners in high fire risk areas with safeguarding their properties from the impacts of high severity wildfire.

For the above reasons, RCRC supports AB 2469 and urges your “aye” vote when this measure is heard before your committee. Please do not hesitate to contact me at sheaton@rcrcnet.org with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Staci Heaton", written in a cursive style.

STACI HEATON
Senior Policy Advocate

Cc: Members of the Assembly Emergency Management Committee
Members of the Assembly Appropriations Committee
Nikita Koraddi, Principal Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Joe Shinstock, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus