



American Planning Association
California Chapter

Creating Great Communities

March 27, 2021

Senator Henry Stern
State Capitol, Room 5080
Sacramento, California 95814

SUBJECT: **Support for SB 63 (Stern) – New Fire Prevention and Protection Standards**

Dear Senator Stern:

The American Planning Association, California Chapter (APA California) is pleased to support your bill, SB 63, which makes a number of important changes to enhance fire prevention and protection efforts, including among other things, improved vegetation management, updated standards for homes in very high fire hazard severity zones (VHFHSZ) and consideration for these same standards in moderate fire risk areas.

Over the past few years California has continued to face record breaking deadly and destructive fires. Sadly, these and many other wildfires in the recent past have become the state's "new normal," which means that the more needs to be done to better prepare and protect communities. SB 63 would implement important new defensible space and vegetation management practices, update building standards that provide for comprehensive site and structure fire risk reductions in the VHFHSZs and consideration of expanded application of such building standards in moderate fire hazard severity zones. Your bill would also expand eligible activities for CAL FIRE's local assistance grant program to provide defensible space training and guidance for communities.

APA California appreciates your efforts on this important issue. Unfortunately, there is no doubt that California will continue to face more intense wildfires (and other natural disasters) in the future and more must be done now to increase fire resiliency in the state. If you have any questions, please contact Lauren De Valencia, Stefan/George Associates, APA California's lobbyist, at 443-5301, lauren@stefangeorge.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Eric Phillips".

Eric Phillips
Vice President Policy and Legislation
APA California

cc: Senate Housing Committee
 Senate Republican Caucus
 The Governor
 The Office of Planning and Research
 The Department of Housing and Community Development

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