



San Diego County Fire Protection District

AGENDA ITEM

GOVERNING BODY

VACANT
First District

JOEL ANDERSON
Second District

TERRA LAWSON-REMER
Third District

MONICA MONTGOMERY STEPPE
Fourth District

JIM DESMOND
Fifth District

DATE: June 24, 2025 and August 26, 2025

FP01

TO: Board of Directors, San Diego County Fire Protection District

SUBJECT

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING:

**AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT THE LOCAL RESPONSIBILITY AREAS FIRE
HAZARD SEVERITY ZONE MAP (6/24/25 - FIRST READING: 8/26/25 - SECOND
READING UNLESS ORDINANCE IS MODIFIED ON SECOND READING)
(DISTRICTS: 2 AND 5)**

OVERVIEW

On September 27, 2022, the State of California enacted Assembly Bill (AB) 211, which established a requirement for the Office of the State Fire Marshal (Fire Marshal) to complete a fire hazard severity zone map update in the Local Responsibility Area (LRA). Once completed by the Fire Marshal, local agencies could make findings that increase the fire hazard severity within their LRA but not decrease it. Within 120 days of the revised LRA maps being made available, the local agency's governing body must adopt, through an ordinance, the fire hazard severity zone map.

On March 24, 2025, the Fire Marshal released the revised fire hazard severity zone map for the San Diego County Fire Protection District (SDCFPD). The fire hazard severity zone maps have been updated to more accurately reflect the zones in California that are susceptible to wildfire. The update incorporates new science in local climate data and improved fire assessment modeling in determining hazard ratings. Responsibility for wildland fire response differs from structural fire protection and emergency medical services. For residential and commercial fires, medical calls, or vehicle accidents, the responsibility is with the local fire agency in the entirety of their jurisdiction. However, for wildland fire, the State and Federal governments provide fire protection and have certain financial responsibilities in their designated areas. If a wildfire occurs in an LRA, the local fire agency is financially and legally responsible for response and coordination duties. Every year these boundaries are reviewed for updates. SDCFPD has 1,854,763 acres, of which 310,031 acres are LRA land. The remaining SDCFPD acres include 929,054 acres that are State Responsibility Area (SRA) and 615,678 acres that are Federal Responsibility Area (FRA). Only the LRA map is included in today's Ordinance, defined as urban regions, agricultural areas, and portions of the desert where the local government is responsible for wildfire protection. SDCFPD's LRA is in Ramona, Borrego Springs and the surrounding area. The new Fire Marshal's LRA fire hazard severity zone map includes 4,536 parcels in SDCFPD that had their fire hazard severity zone classification increase from no designation to either moderate, high, or very high. In addition, 189 parcels had their fire hazard severity zone classification decrease from very high to either no

SUBJECT: NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING: AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT THE LOCAL RESPONSIBILITY AREAS FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONE MAP (6/24/25 - FIRST READING: 8/26/25 - SECOND READING UNLESS ORDINANCE IS MODIFIED ON SECOND READING) (DISTRICTS 2 AND 5)

designation, moderate, or high. San Diego County Fire, on behalf of the SDCFPD, has reviewed the LRA maps and is not proposing any increases to severity. Today's action includes the first reading of an ordinance adopting the State Fire Marshal's LRA fire hazard severity zone map.

RECOMMENDATION(S)
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

On June 24, 2025:

1. Approve the introduction of the Ordinance (first reading):

AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT THE LOCAL RESPONSIBILITY AREAS FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONE MAP

If on June 24, 2025, the Board of Directors takes action as recommended, then on August 26, 2025:

2. Consider and adopt (unless ordinance is modified on second reading):

AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT THE LOCAL RESPONSIBILITY AREAS FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONE MAP

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The San Diego County Fire Protection District includes some of the lowest-income and most vulnerable communities. Revised Local Responsibility Area (LRA) Fire Hazard Severity maps improve resiliency for at-risk residents if future wildfires were to ignite in the service area.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The proposed action to adopt an ordinance of the Local Responsibility Area Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map within the San Diego County Fire Protection District contributes to the County of San Diego's Sustainability Goals to protect the health and wellbeing of residents. These actions will impact sustainability by providing accurate wildfire hazard models through new fire hazard severity zone maps for specific properties.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with today's actions. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

On May 12, 2025, the Local Responsibility Areas Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps were presented to the Fire Advisory Board, and they voted unanimously, with all seven members present, in support of the zones as presented.

SUBJECT: NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING: AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT THE LOCAL RESPONSIBILITY AREAS FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONE MAP (6/24/25 - FIRST READING: 8/26/25 - SECOND READING UNLESS ORDINANCE IS MODIFIED ON SECOND READING) (DISTRICTS 2 AND 5)

BACKGROUND

Local Responsibility Areas (LRA) include incorporated cities and urban areas, agriculture lands, and portions of the desert in the unincorporated area where the local fire agency is responsible for both structural and wildland fire protection, medical calls, vehicle accidents and other emergency incidents. The majority of the San Diego County Fire Protection District (SDCFPD) is within the State Responsibility Area (SRA), which is a legal term defining the area where the State has responsibility for wildfire protection and response efforts. Most of the remaining area in the SDCFPD is the Federal Responsibility Area (FRA), which designates lands owned or controlled by the federal government, and where federal agencies have primary responsibility for administering and protecting against wildfire. Although much of SDCFPD is within SRA or FRA and wildland fire protection is handled by state and federal agencies, County Fire is still responsible for structural fire protection and EMS within the entirety of the SDCFPD.

The SDCFPD covers 1,854,763 acres, but there are 310,031 acres of LRA in two separate areas. One area is within the center of Ramona and the other area is in Borrego Springs and extends south to the Mountain Empire and Desert areas.

In 2022, the State of California enacted Assembly Bill (AB) 211 that directed the Office of the State Fire Marshal (Fire Marshal) to review and update fire hazard severity for LRA lands. Once completed by the Fire Marshal, local agencies could make findings that increase the fire hazard severity within their LRA but not decrease it. Within 120 days of the revised LRA maps being made available, the local agency's governing body must adopt, via ordinance, the maps. The last update to LRA fire risk severity occurred in 2007. At that time, SDCFPD was not formed, so many of the changes reflect no designation to a designation of moderate, high or very high. These are the number of Parcels that have changed in the 2025 LRA Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps from the 2007 LRA Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps:

CLASSIFICATION CHANGE	RAMONA (Parcels)	BORREGO SPRINGS (Parcels)	DESERT (Parcels)	MOUNTAIN EMPIRE (Parcels)	TOTALS (Parcels)
No Designation to Moderate	263	2,199	1,487	14	3,963
No Designation to High	286	2	6	0	294
No Designation to Very High	279	0	0	0	279
Very High to No Designation	0	1	0	0	1
Very High to Moderate	87	1	3	0	91
Very High to High	97	0	0	0	97
Totals =	1,012	2,203	1,496	14	4,725

Of the 4,725 parcels in the SDCFPD impacted by the proposed LRA map, the classifications of 4,536 parcels have increased and the classifications of 189 parcels have decreased. To determine the Fire Hazard Severity Zone for a specific property, the State Fire Marshal's website

SUBJECT: NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING: AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT THE LOCAL RESPONSIBILITY AREAS FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONE MAP (6/24/25 - FIRST READING: 8/26/25 - SECOND READING UNLESS ORDINANCE IS MODIFIED ON SECOND READING) (DISTRICTS 2 AND 5)

(osfm.fire.ca.gov/fhsz) has an interactive feature where a person can find the current classification by searching by address.

The hazard maps are being updated to more accurately reflect the zones in California that are susceptible to wildfire. The update incorporates new science in local climate data and improved fire assessment modeling in determining hazard ratings. The model has two key elements: probability of an area burning and expected fire behavior under extreme fuel and weather conditions. The factors considered in determining fire hazard within wildland areas are the history, flame length, terrain, local weather, and potential fuel over a 50-year period. Outside of wildlands, the model considers factors that might lead to buildings being threatened, including terrain, weather, urban vegetation cover, blowing embers, proximity to wildland, fire history, and fire hazard in nearby wildlands. The classifications are used to designate where California's defensible space standards and wildland urban interface building codes are required. The classifications can be a factor in real estate disclosure, and local governments may consider these classifications in their general plan.

The classifications are used to determine which development projects are required to process a fire protection plan and an evacuation plan, which is mostly the case in high or very high severity zones. These classifications are also used to determine which building permits are required to meet the standards of the wildland urban interface building codes, such as dual-paned windows and fire-resistant roofs.

San Diego County Fire staff, on behalf of the SDCFPD, have reviewed the LRA maps and are not proposing any increases to severity because we do not have any further information to indicate an increase in the classification is warranted. Today's action includes the first reading of an ordinance adopting the State Fire Marshal's LRA map.

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

N/A

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's adoption of an ordinance of the Local Responsibility Areas Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps within the San Diego County Fire Protection District supports the Community Initiative of the County of San Diego's 2025-2030 Strategic Plan by ensuring of the safety of County residents.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Strong', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Andrew Strong for

SUBJECT: NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING: AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT THE
LOCAL RESPONSIBILITY AREAS FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONE
MAP (6/24/25 - FIRST READING: 8/26/25 - SECOND READING UNLESS
ORDINANCE IS MODIFIED ON SECOND READING) (DISTRICTS 2
AND 5)

EBONY N. SHELTON
Executive Director

ATTACHMENT(S)

Note: Due to the size of the attachments, the documents are available online through the Clerk of the Board's website at www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/cob/bosa.html.

Attachment A: An Ordinance to Adopt the Local Responsibility Areas Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map

Attachment B: Assembly Bill No. 211

Attachment C: Summary of Proposed Ordinance