

Subcommittee Report

Community Wildfire Preparedness/Prevention Projects and Grant Funding Opportunities

New Requirements for Fuels Management Adjacent to Homes

The California Public Resources Code (Section 4291) requires that persons that own properties that adjoin forested lands such as Tilden and Wildcat Canyon Parks maintain a 100-foot defensible space around their properties to prevent fuels from igniting their homes during a wildfire. Recent amendments to the code require property owners to maintain an ember-resistant zone within 5 feet of their home based on regulations promulgated by the California Board of Forestry & Fire Protection. The regulations are intended to address the elimination of materials in the ember-resistant zone that would likely be ignited by embers.

The board expects to propose the new regulations sometime in the spring of this year. It is likely that the regulations would become final in the fall of 2023. The code also requires that the regulations will take effect for existing structures one year after the effective date for new structures.

In addition, the board is required to develop and periodically update a guidance document on fuels management. By January 1, 2023, the board is required to update the guidance document to include suggestions for creating an ember-resistant zone within five feet of a structure, based on regulations promulgated by the board. Update has yet to be completed.

Potential Grant Funding Opportunities

CAL FIRE Wildfire Prevention Grants

These grants provide funding for fire prevention projects and activities in and near fire threatened communities. Funded activities include hazardous fuels reduction, wildfire prevention planning, and wildfire prevention education. FY 2022/2023 grant application period ends March 15, 2023, which is too soon for the district to consider applying. EPC should begin to work on identifying potential projects for the FY 2023/2024 grant cycle.

CALFIRE has an excellent web site that provides a summary of the projects that were funded over the past several fiscal years.

Contra Costa County Measure X Wildfire Mitigation Program

Measure X increased the county sales tax to provide funding for a variety of county services including wildfire mitigation and fuel reduction activities. The Contra Costa County Fire Protection District (CCCFPD) manages a Wildfire Mitigation Program that uses Measure X funds to support a number of programs designed to reduce wildfire risk. These programs include: 1) Firewise USA Community Strategic Plan Projects (grants up to \$5,000); 2) Home Hardening Outreach Program; and 3) Vegetation Management and Fuel Reduction. The district should work with residents to identify potential projects for funding. Information on the Wildfire Mitigation Program is available on the CCCFPD web site: <https://www.cccfpd.org/wildfire-mitigation-program/>

Diablo Firesafe Council

The Diablo Firesafe Council (DFC) has provided grants to homeowners in the past of up to \$5000 to undertake vegetation management projects. It is unclear as to the DFC's funding status. Their web site information appears dated as the application for defensible space fuel reduction project funding refers to funding for 2020 – 2021.