

Attachment G

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Bel Air – Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council

Subject: Resolution Supporting Megafire Prevention Package (with amendments)

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt a Resolution supporting the relevant bills contained in the 2026 Joint Megafire Prevention Package with the recommended amendments as proposed below.

CURRENT SITUATION:

In March of this year, California Lawmakers Unveiled a 13-Bill Wildfire Prevention Package. The legislative package includes bills from California State Senators Allen, Becker and Stern, alongside California Assemblymembers Bennett, Connolly and Rogers. This legislative package aims to shift the state's strategy from reactive firefighting to proactive. The package addresses wildfire resilience on three fronts: providing homeowners with both financial and informational resources for defensible space and home hardening, accelerating the adoption of new firefighting technologies, and reducing barriers to beneficial fire.

Since March, two of the bills which were introduced by Assemblymember Steve Bennett, AB 1986 and AB 2013, failed to move forward and are now considered “dead”. This leaves the package with 11 active bills to be considered.

The Bel Air Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council has carefully reviewed these remaining 11 bills and has made recommendations to approve the bills that are relevant to the Los Angeles community, together with what it believes are appropriate amendments. These recommendations are in the attached document.

BACKGROUND:

The BABCNC represents hillside communities which are located in a very high fire severity zone (VHFSZ). We represent communities stretching from Laurel Canyon to Sepulveda Blvd., and from Sunset Blvd. to Mulholland Drive. As the advocate for more than 27,000 residents, BABCNC is currently made up of representatives from more than 35 residential associations, local schools, businesses, faith-based institutions, in addition to members-at-large.

The BABCNC strongly supports the need for legislation which will treat our state’s megafire crisis with the appropriate urgency and we support practical, science-based measures that will give our residents the tools to improve their fire readiness.

Our Board Members work closely with the LAFD Fire House Chiefs in our Council area to help resolve fire safety issues and to keep our residents updated regarding best practices for wildfire resilience. During the devastating wildfires in 2025 our area was fortunate not to sustain any losses, but we were on high alert, and many residents were forced to evacuate their homes.

Wildfire mitigation is becoming increasingly critical as climate change intensifies fire risk. Fire season has now become year-round, and wildfire mitigation is becoming increasingly critical, especially for those of us living in a VHFSZ. As wildfire risk has increased, many homeowners in our communities have lost access to traditional insurance and have been forced to rely on California’s FAIR Plan—the insurer of last resort—which often costs more and provides less coverage.

We hope the bills in this package will give homeowners clearer guidance and resources to reduce wildfire risk while speeding the adoption of technologies that help firefighters and communities protect lives and property. At the same time, we caution against a one-size-fits-all approach to vegetation management. Vegetation management should be prescribed in a manner that is region specific and sensitive to the health of the local ecosystem. As a result, it would be appropriate for the state to be careful not to conflate vegetation management with home hardening. The BABCNC hopes that you bear this in mind and that you will support our recommendations below.

MEGAFIRE PACKAGE BILL SUMMARIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SB 894. This bill was introduced by State Senator Ben Allen. It would establish the California Wildfire Resilience Loan Program which would help property owners finance upgrades for home hardening and defensible space improvements.

The BABCNC recommends supporting this bill with an amendment to prioritize highest impact home hardening improvements over extensive vegetation clearing.

SB 1079. This bill was introduced by State Senator Henry Stern. This *bill* would establish the Fire Innovation Unit within the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, under the direction of a Deputy Director of Wildfire Innovation. It would serve as the state’s principal hub for wildfire technology research, coordination, procurement, and deployment for technologies that, among other things, improve ecosystem and landscape scale resilience. It would also require annual reporting. ***The BABCNC recommends supporting this bill.***

AB 1699. This bill was introduced by Assemblymember Rogers. This bill would establish the Good Fire Act, which would indefinitely extend the Prescribed Fire Liability Program.

The BABCNC recommends supporting this bill if it is amended to exclude non-coniferous, chaparral landscapes, where science shows burns convert native habitat to invasive grasses that worsen fire risk. We also recommend that the bill includes smoke planning as well as proper notification and evacuation safeguards.

AB 1891. This bill was introduced by Assemblymember Connolly. This bill deals with prescribed burns.

The BABCNC recommends supporting this bill if it is amended to exclude non-coniferous, chaparral landscapes, where science shows burns convert native habitat to invasive grasses that worsen fire risk. We also recommend that the bill includes smoke planning as well as proper notification and evacuation safeguards.

SB 1404. This bill was introduced by State Senator Henry Stern. This bill deals with “State Responsibility Areas”.

The BABCNC recommends not taking a position on this bill as it is not relevant to the Los Angeles community.

AB 1971. This bill was introduced by Assemblymember Steve Bennett. This bill relates to property taxes and would require the State Board of Equalization to clarify that home hardening retrofitting improvements on existing homes will be excluded from tax reassessment. ***The BABCNC recommends supporting this bill.***

AB 1960. This bill was introduced by Assemblymember Steve Bennett. This bill proposes to incentivize community-wide wildfire protection by directing state funds from the Wildfire Prevention Grants Program to prioritize neighborhoods where at least 50% of the homes have achieved a verified "home hardening".

The BABCNC recommends supporting this bill.

AB 1964. This bill was introduced by Assemblymember Steve Bennett. This bill is aimed at assessing and cataloging the progress of home hardening in moderate, high, and very high fire hazard severity zones. ***The BABCNC recommends supporting this bill.***

SB 973. This bill was introduced by State Senator Josh Becker. This bill would direct Cal Fire to develop standardized risk assessment guidelines and proposes to expand the Wildfire County Coordinator Program to give local counties more resources, standardized tools, and funding to implement community-level fire mitigation projects.

The BABCNC recommends supporting this bill. Improving coordination and planning will help communities move from reacting to disasters to preparing for them. We want to add the amendment, however, to give counties adequate flexibility to implement the fire mitigation projects based on the specific and unique needs of their communities.

AB 1934. This bill was introduced by State Assemblymember Steve Bennett. This bill would require the State Fire Marshal's Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Committee to develop an implementation plan for a "home hardening certification program". It would assist homeowners in identifying home hardening measures, including defensible space, that can be voluntarily implemented during renovation or property improvement projects.

The BABCNC recommends supporting this bill with the amendment that the certification program excludes defensible space and focuses on home hardening only. Home hardening and defensible space should not be conflated. Defensible space requirements are already in place for homes in high fire severity zones whereas home hardening requirements for existing homes, are still "recommendations". Furthermore, defensible space requirements vary by region.

SB 911. This bill was introduced by State Senator Josh Becker. This bill builds upon the current requirement for sellers of property in high or very high fire hazard severity zones to provide buyers with documentation showing compliance with fire safety requirements or vegetation management ordinances. When documentation has not been obtained, this bill would require the seller to inform the fire department. The department would be required to conduct a compliance inspection and the state, in turn, would be required to reimburse the department for the cost of those inspections.

The BABCNC does not recommend supporting this bill. Firefighters already have their hands full and are understaffed. This would simply add another layer of bureaucratic busy work to the fire department.