



CITY OF LAGUNA NIGUEL

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CITY COUNCIL

Mayor Ray Gennawey
Mayor Pro Tem Gene Johns
Council Member Kelly Jennings
Council Member Stephanie Oddo
Council Member Stephanie Winstead

June 27, 2025

The Honorable Monique Limon
Chair, Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Water
1021 O Street, Room 3220
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 261 (Quirk-Silva) Fire Safety: Fire Hazard Severity Zones: State Fire Marshal Notice of Support (As Amended on March 26, 2025)

Dear Senator Limon,

The City of Laguna Niguel is pleased to support **AB 261** (Quirk-Silva), which would authorize the Office of the State Fire Marshal to confer with entities on the development of the fire hazard severity zone designations between the periodic reviews of the fire hazard severity zone maps.

The Office of the State Fire Marshal is authorized under current law to develop and release fire hazard severity zone maps for the State Responsibility Areas (SRAs) and Local Responsibility Areas (LRAs), using the state's best available science and data. The maps show fire hazards in these areas, including environmental conditions such as slope, wind patterns, vegetation type, and other conditions that influence how a fire could spread. For fire hazard severity zone designations in the LRA, these maps, once released by the state, are further mandated to be adopted via local ordinance within 120 days by local governments. As required by statute, local governments only have the authority to increase, not decrease, the fire hazard designation within their jurisdiction.

AB 261 would authorize the Office of the State Fire Marshal to confer with entities, such as public agencies, tribes, nonprofits, and members of the public, between official map designation review periods, related to actions that may impact the degree of fire hazard in an area or the area's recommended fire hazard severity designation. Further, the bill would allow these entities to provide information to the State Fire Marshal on wildfire safety improvements and other actions or plans to increase fire safety prior to the next review.

As of this year, there are approximately 389 cities located in a designated fire hazard severity zone. The bill would allow for cities to work with the Office of the State Fire Marshal to address any inconsistencies in their fire hazard severity designation between updates and identify concerns prior to being required to adopt updated LRA maps. While the maps include specific environmental conditions that contribute to fire hazard severity, there is currently no consideration of local land use information, which has created some challenges in this process locally. It is critical that cities, which retain land use authority, have the ability to share with the State Fire Marshal land use planning information. The ability to confer with the state could greatly improve the state designation process and facilitate better local application of fire hazard impacts.

For these reasons, the City of Laguna Niguel is pleased to support **AB 261 (Quirk-Silva)**. Should you have any questions about our position, please contact Kevin O'Connor, Assistant to the City Manager, at koconnor@cityoflagunaniquel.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ray Gennawey".

Ray Gennawey
Mayor

Cc: Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Water
Assembly Member Quirk-Silva
Laguna Niguel City Council