STATE OF CALIFORNIA—THE NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCY

Edmund G. Brown, Jr., *Governor*

BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION

P.O. Box 944246
SACRAMENTO, CA 94244-2460
Website: www.bof.fire.ca.gov
(916) 653-8007

To: Resource Protection Committee
Chair Bruce Saito
Member Keith Gilless
Member Sue Husari

Date: February 25, 2015

Telephone: (916) 653-8007

Website: www.bof.fire.ca.gov

From: Edith Hannigan, Board Consultant

Subject: Safety Element Assessment Evaluation Criteria

Dear Chair Saito, Member Gilless, and Member Husari,

The Safety Element Assessment is used by Board staff and staff of the CAL FIRE Land Use Planning Program (LUPP) to evaluate General Plan Safety Elements submitted to the Board for approval. The Safety Element Assessment has three versions, assigned to a jurisdiction based on the amount of Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ), State Responsibility Area (SRA), existing financial and physical resources in the community, and previous wildfire protection planning efforts. Version 1 assumes high fire hazard/SRA, extensive firefighting resources, and multiple successful previous wildfire planning efforts (Los Angeles County, San Luis Obispo County) whereas Version 3 assumes little to no fire hazard/SRA, limited firefighting resources, and little to no previous wildfire protection planning (recently incorporated communities, low population centers, etc).

LUPP staff requested the Board supply criteria to allow for clearer communication with local governments when providing them with an Assessment to use as a guide for their safety element update. Considering the Safety Element Assessment is utilized to evaluate 56 counties and 200 local jurisdictions, Board staff came up with two approaches for assigning Safety Element Assessment Versions to counties versus cities.

All counties, except those listed below, are assigned Safety Element Assessment Version 1. Counties assigned Safety Element Assessment Version 1 have

- Overall high population densities
- High proportion of SRA or VHFHSZ LRA
- Population centers in or adjacent to VHFHSZ SRA, if there is no designated VHFHSZ LRA in the county
- Within the context of neighboring counties, the location of VHFHSZ in the county creates an overall picture of contiguous fuels that threaten population or economic centers

The counties assigned Safety Element Assessment Version 2 are Colusa, Imperial, Inyo, Kings, Merced, Modoc, and Mono. These counties have small amounts of SRA and/or Fire Hazard Severity Zones, population centers in Moderate or no FHSZ, and do not add significantly to contiguous high fire hazard fuels at the region level.

Given the fluid nature of local jurisdictions' population, boundaries, and fire risk, Board staff have opted to develop a checklist for utilization by LUPP rather than assigning each community an assessment version. This checklist will ask staff to consider:

- Population and population density
- Proportion of land designated VHFHSZ
- Firefighting capabilities (paid, volunteer, equipment, etc)
- Past planning efforts and involvement of organizations such as local Fire Safe Councils
- Relative location of population and economic centers to VHFHSZs
- Context of VHFHSZ within the region – does the VHFHSZ in a jurisdiction combine with neighboring fuels to create a continual pattern of very high fire risk?

This checklist is being developed with research assistance from FRAP and a draft will be available for RPC review at the April 7 meeting. Board staff is asking RPC at this time for additional considerations and input to incorporate into the county determinations and checklist criteria.

Thank you.