

Date June 18th, 2019

To: The Honorable Adam Gray, Chair
The Honorable Frank Bigelow, Vice Chair
Members, Assembly Governmental Organization Committee

From: Rex D. Frazier, President
Seren Taylor, Senior Legislative Advocate

Re: SB 190 (Dodd) Fire Safety: Building Standards: Defensible Space Program



STATE FARM

LIBERTY MUTUAL
INSURANCE

PROGRESSIVE

MERCURY

NATIONWIDE

NAMIC

PIFC Position: Support

The Personal Insurance Federation of California (PIFC) is a statewide trade association that represents five of the nation's largest insurance companies (State Farm, Liberty Mutual Insurance, Progressive, Mercury, and Nationwide as well as associate member NAMIC) who write personal line auto and home insurance in California.

PIFC is pleased to support SB 190, a measure that will create a model defensible space program for California. The statewide program will increase the level of awareness and compliance with the State's defensible space requirements. In addition, the development of the SB 190 model defensible space program will benefit from the input and expertise of representatives from local, state, and federal fire services, local government, building officials, the building industry, utility companies, insurers, insurance research organizations, and the environmental community.

PIFC has long supported legislation to develop model defensible space programs and improved fire safety building standards in order to promote positive action by building owners, contractors and local government. A defensible space area around a building in which vegetation, debris, and other types of combustible fuels have been treated, cleared, or reduced can help slow the spread of fire to and from the building. It is one of the most cost-effective ways to protect a building from a wildfire and can often be created by the property owner.

As the state looks forward after the 2017 and 2018 wildfires, it is critical that we move towards long-term, comprehensive solutions that can reduce future risk and increase resilience for the next time disaster strikes. Improved vegetation management, increased home and community mitigation efforts, and enhanced emergency response systems are all key components to ensuring California is better prepared to address and to recover from a disaster.

SB 190 will help encourage a greater understanding of California's requirements for defensible space around structures, which is beneficial for all of our communities. For this reason, PIFC supports SB 190. If you have any questions regarding PIFC's position, please contact Seren Taylor at (916) 442-6646.

cc: Senator Bill Dodd, Author
Eric Johnson, Chief Consultant, Assembly Governmental Organization Committee
Suzanne Sutton, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus
Melissa Immel, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of the Governor
Michael Martinez, Senior Deputy Commissioner and Legislative Director, California Department of Insurance