



March 13, 2008

To: The Honorable Darrell Steinberg, Chair, Senate Natural Resources and Water Vice-Chair and Members, Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee

From: California Building Industry Association      California Business Properties Association  
 Ca Manufacturers & Technology Association      California Forestry Association  
 Personal Insurance Federation of California      California Apartment Association  
 Consulting Engineers & Land Surveyors

**RE: SUPPORT for SB 1231 (Correa): Wildfire Protection**

The above listed organizations are in support of SB 1231 (Correa) and request that you vote “yes” on this measure. This measure is seeking to establish several very useful wildland fire safety measures that have proven to be of great benefit when implemented on an on-going basis.

**Defensible Space Guideline:**

*The Office of the State Fire Marshal (SFM) is directed to develop a “model defensible space” guideline intended for use by local jurisdictions in the enforcement of California’s existing defensible space requirements.* Even though California’s requirements for defensible space around homes in “high” and “very-high” hazard zones has been in place for years, many local jurisdictions do not enforce this common-sense requirement. Conversely, Ventura County has for two decades implemented a very aggressive defensible space ordinance with over 15,000 lots being inspected every year. As a result, of the 32,990 requests for disaster assistance received by the Federal Emergency Management Agency after the 2003 firestorms, less than 1% of those came from Ventura County residents.

**Building Standards Compliance Manual:**

*The SFM is directed to develop and update on a regular basis a Wildland Urban Interface Building Standard compliance training manual and “compliant product handbook” for use by designers, contractors and code enforcement personnel.* As with any building code, the education and training of those who actually implement the code is key to the effective application of that code, yet government rarely follows through on this important part of regulatory development. In addition, it is also very important for contractors and code-enforcement personnel to have access to current listings of building materials and products that can be used to comply with the code.

**Fire Risk Maps:**

*The Director of CAL FIRE shall report back to the Legislature by 3/31/09 regarding the preparation of fire risk maps for the State of California, including which counties should be mapped on a priority basis and the identification of possible funding sources to cover the cost of map development.* In precisely the same way industry mitigates against potential damage from earthquakes through the use of seismic zone “risk maps”, Cal Fire needs to initiate the development of similar, statewide maps that accurately detail the level of fire risk in certain areas.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that you **vote “yes” on SB 1231.**