



# California Wildfire Mitigation Program Board Meeting

## Meeting Minutes – Friday, February 28, 2025



### **Board Members Present**

Abby Browning, Board Chair, Chief, Private Sector / Non-Governmental Organization Coordination, Cal OES

Frank Bigelow, Board Vice-Chair, Deputy Director, Community Wildfire Preparedness & Mitigation and Fire Engineering & Investigations, CAL FIRE

Daniel Berlant, Board Member, State Fire Marshal, CAL FIRE

### **CWMP Staff Present**

J. Lopez, Executive Director

Jordon Boyer, Staff Manager

Sarah Glenn, Program Coordinator

Shawn Oberbruner, Program Coordinator

### **Cal OES Staff Present**

Robyn Fennig, Assistant Director, Hazard Mitigation

Ron Miller, Branch Chief, Hazard Mitigation Assistance

Ryan Massello, Division Chief, Hazard Mitigation

Matthew Delgado, Staff Services Manager I, Hazard Mitigation Special Projects

Julie Leo, Associate Governmental Program Analyst, Hazard Mitigation Special Projects

Angelica Quezada, Associate Governmental Program Analyst, Hazard Mitigation Special Projects

Brandon Gresham, Associate Governmental Program Analyst, Hazard Mitigation Special Projects

Charmaine Faleaana, Associate Governmental Program Analyst, Hazard Mitigation Support Unit (Virtual)

### **CAL FIRE Staff Present**

John Morgan, Staff Chief of Wildfire Risk Reduction

Heather McCulley, Deputy Chief of Wildfire Preparedness (Virtual)

Randy Northup, Battalion Chief

Justine Grafton, Associate Governmental Program Analyst, Home Hardening

Kara Garrett, Deputy State Fire Marshal III (Specialist) (Virtual)

Jillian Fisher, Staff Services Manager I

Carrie Lewis, Associate Governmental Program Analyst, OSFM Support Services

Danh Dao, Staff Services Analyst, OSFM Support Services

**I. CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME – 10:00 AM**

- a. The meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM and welcome remarks provided by Board Chair A. Browning.

**II. ROLL CALL/QUORUM ESTABLISHED**

- a. Roll call and quorum established with all Board Members present.
  - A. Browning – Present
  - F. Bigelow – Present
  - D. Berlant – Present
  - R. Troy – Absent

**III. Consent Agenda Items**

- a. Review and approval of Meeting Minutes from November 19, 2024. No public comments received.

**Motion:** F. Bigelow moved to approve the Meeting Minutes from November 19, 2024.

A. Browning seconded the motion.

**Action:** Three in favor, One Absent, motion carried.

**IV. Discussion and Action Items**

- a. Receive CWMP Pilot Program update (Information item)
  - Cal OES Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) Special Projects Unit (SPU) Update
    - Matthew Delgado, Staff Services Manager I, Hazard Mitigation Special Projects
      - i. SPU Staffing Report
        - 1. Fully Staffed since November 2024
          - a. Brandon Gresham – Senior Grants Management Analyst
      - ii. Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) Expenditures as of December 31, 2024
        - 1. Update on Total Project Costs per Sub-Applicant as of December 31, 2024
      - iii. CWMP Engage Portal Enhancements
        - 1. New development contract January 2025
        - 2. Current Focus
          - a. Improving reporting capabilities
          - b. Better user experience
          - c. Increasing efficiency
        - 3. Between March and July
          - a. Cost capture
          - b. Mitigation tracking
      - iv. PJ0512 Project Time Extension
        - 1. Current period of performance ends July 2025

2. Time Extension requested until July 2026
  - a. Further develop the CWMP Framework
  - b. Completion of CWMP Engage Portal
  - c. Ample time for closeout
- v. CWMP Framework
  1. Framework Documents – Draft Version 2.2
    - a. Primary aim is to support the development of Home Hardening Projects across the state
    - b. Intended to be used at any scale and agnostic of funding
    - c. Aligned with PJ0512 deliverables for FEMA
  2. Deliverables
    - a. Core Document
    - b. CWMP Appendices
    - c. FEMA Appendices
    - d. Other Appendices
    - e. Sample Forms and Templates
  3. Draft Copies
    - a. Available at the back of the room
    - b. CWMP Website
- CAL FIRE Update – Battalion Chief Randy Northup
  - i. After 34 years of dedication to the fire service, Chief Dennis O'Neil decided to retire in December 2024
  - ii. CAL FIRE Staff has continued with the development of the new Home Hardening Assessment Application
  - iii. CAL FIRE staff continue to support the California Wildfire Mitigation Program with technical assistance with recommended retrofits and associated standards
  - iv. Home Ignition Zone/ Defensible Space Assessor training was conducted on Tuesday, February 11, 2025, and Thursday, February 20, 2025. Four new assessors were trained: two from San Diego and two from Shasta WSRCD. Two assessors from North Coast Opportunities Lake County took the training as a refresher
- California Wildfire Mitigation Program (CWMP) Pilot Program Update –
  - i. San Diego County/San Diego County Fire Protection District (SDCFPD) – Program Coordinator, Sarah Glenn
    1. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Environmental and Historical Preservation (EHP) Update -
      - a. Biological Assessment (BA) complete for all three project areas, Dulzura, Campo, and Potrero, including the expanded areas
        - i. Submitted four Phase II reports for “Issue Properties”
        - ii. First community to submit Phase II reports, working out process for review with FEMA
      - b. Pending Record of Environmental Consideration (REC) for the additional 69 “No-Issue” properties in the expanded area

2. Site-Work Updates –
  - a. Construction started on two additional sites
    - i. One complete as of this week, the other will be complete in next couple of weeks
    - ii. Total: Two Complete and One in Progress
3. Defensible Space Inspections in Campo
  - a. Warning letters are citing combustibles within 10 feet of propane enclosures
    - i. Homeowners Association (HOA) now requiring replacement of vinyl fence enclosures for all homeowners regardless of participation in CWMP
    - ii. Also citing combustibles within 5 feet (Zone 0)
4. San Diego County – Border 2 Fire (01/23/2025)
  - a. All of Dulzura was under Evacuation Order
- ii. Siskiyou County/Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District (SVRCD) – Sarah Glenn
  1. Site Work Updates – Batch One
    - a. Pending some final Zone 0 work, work halted due to snow
  2. Site Work Updates – Batch Two
    - a. Tree removal has begun for second batch of seven homes, will complete Zone 0 debris removal in spring
  3. Contractor Training
    - a. Will be conducting contractor training for their participating contractors
    - b. Training will help the contractors with the bidding process
- iii. Shasta County/Shasta County Fire Safe Council (FSC) –Program Coordinator, Sarah Glenn on behalf of Kenneth Jacobs-DeLeon.
  1. Site Work
    - a. Three defensible space projects completed, three more to begin March 3, 2025
    - b. RFQ will be released next week for D-Space on three additional homes
    - c. Completed 11 assessments since January 1st
    - d. First home hardening bid walk for two homes in Whitmore.
      - i. Three General Contractors attended.
      - ii. Currently reviewing bids and will award contract by February 28
  2. Staff
    - a. Contracted a Labor Compliance Consultant
  3. FEMA
    - a. Biological Assessment has been completed
    - b. Awaiting Final signatures and approval
- iv. Lake County/North Coast Opportunities (NCO) – Sarah Glenn on behalf of Kenneth Jacobs-DeLeon.
  1. Site Work
    - a. 18 Homes have been completed

- b. Five homes in active construction
  - c. Seven SOW in development
  - d. Two to start in the bid process this week
- 2. Staff
  - a. Looking to double staffing and home production in 2025
- 3. Community Engagement
  - a. January 25th Community Event:
  - b. Showcased approved CWMP retrofit materials with a presentation & meet-and-greet
    - i. Hosted in person and on Zoom for virtual participation.
- v. Tuolumne County – Sarah Glenn on behalf of Kenneth Jacobs-DeLeon
  - 1. EHP Phase I Update
    - a. Biological Assessment has been approved
    - b. Awaiting final signatures and approval
  - 2. Staff
    - a. Hired a Full time Analyst
    - b. In the process of hiring two more staff members
      - i. One more Analyst
      - ii. One Project Manager
      - iii. Secured an Office space for the Project Manager
  - 3. Community Outreach
    - a. Interest from Homeowners and Contractors on how to apply
    - b. Have done social media updates and mass mailers to maintain interest
- vi. El Dorado County – Sarah Glenn on behalf of Kenneth Jacobs-DeLeon
  - 1. EHP Phase I
    - a. Phase I Deliverables have been submitted to FEMA
      - i. 74 No Issue Properties
  - 2. Program Documents
    - a. Continuing to work on drafts of the Master Agreement, Right of Entry and Tri-Party Agreement.
  - 3. Staff
    - a. RFQ for construction manager extended to February 25
      - i. Three responses received
- b. Executive Director Update – J. Lopez
  - CWMPA Program Coordinator Position – Shawn Oberbruner
  - Monthly CWMP Report
    - i. Updates include information on the costs for completed projects
    - ii. The Board provided positive feedback on the updated report
    - iii. The Report will be posted to the website monthly going forward
  - Support to Local and State Wildfire Home Hardening Efforts
    - i. Continue assistance to wildfire home hardening projects: Napa County, Sonoma County, California Fire Safe Council

- Provided access to program photos shared folder to Cal OES Deputy Director Palmer and CAL FIRE Deputy Director McMorrow
- Continue CWMPA Support to Wildfire & Forest Resilience Task Force Goal #2
  - i. Leads: Fire Adapted Communities and Ascent Environmental
- CWMP Website [California Wildfire Mitigation Program](#)
  - i. There have been numerous updates, including posting the reports that we are providing
- Program Recipient Contribution Requirements
  - i. Government Code 8654.8.
    - 1. (a) The joint powers authority shall develop eligibility criteria for property owners, community organizations, and local governments who may receive financial assistance under the wildfire mitigation program in accordance with this article.
    - 2. (b) The joint powers authority may also establish financial assistance limits and matching funding or other recipient contribution requirements, as necessary, to ensure the viability and efficient operation of the wildfire mitigation program and to maximize the program's impact on reducing wildfire risk in California.
  - Options:
    - a. 0%, 10%, 25%, of State Contribution
    - b. 0%, 10%, 25%, of Total Project Cost
  - 3. The decision on how to determine the cost share is the decision of the Board
    - a. We will provide a detailed presentation at the next meeting
- Form 700
  - i. Due end of March 2025
  - ii. The CWMPA Staff have all completed their forms
- CWMPA Executive Director Evaluation
  - i. J. Lopez is working with HR to align his annual evaluation with his work anniversary date.
    - 1. He will be sending documentation to the Board next week
  - ii. Looking to have a closed session after the March Board Meeting
- FEMA EHP Streamlining Project
  - i. Project: Exploring opportunities to further streamline EHP reviews through participation in agreement documents with state and federal partners
  - ii. FEMA assembled team, developed and reviewed internal work priorities regarding agreements
  - iii. Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, CAL FIRE, and Cal OES Representatives Selected
  - iv. California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA):
    - 1. California State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
- Federal Legislation Update
  - i. Disaster Mitigation and Tax Parity Act 2025\_
    - 1. Text - S.336 - 119th Congress (2025-2026): A bill to amend the Internal

Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude from gross income amounts received from State-based catastrophe loss mitigation programs. | Congress.gov | Library of Congress

ii. H.R.7849 - Disaster Resiliency and Coverage Act of 2024

1. Text - H.R.7849 - 118th Congress (2023-2024): Disaster Resiliency and Coverage Act of 2024 | Congress.gov | Library of Congress
2. The legislation includes four main provisions.
  - a. 1<sup>st</sup> creates a grant program, administered through State governments, through which individual households in designated disaster-prone regions (with certain limitations) are eligible for up to \$10,000 for specified disaster resiliency work on their homes.
  - b. 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> provisions (Sections 3 and 4 of the legislation) mirror existing legislation (H.R. 4070) stipulating that payments from State-run disaster resiliency programs and payments from various federal emergency agricultural programs are not considered income for federal tax purposes.
  - c. 4<sup>th</sup> section provides a 30% tax credit for qualified disaster risk mitigation activities conducted by individuals or businesses. The credit is meant to complement the grant program by providing meaningful assistance to larger property owners for whom mitigation activity costs would far exceed \$10,000

iii. SB616 Community Hardening Commission: wildfire mitigation program

1. Require the joint powers authority to revise the wildfire mitigation program in accordance with prescribed community hardening standards and guidelines developed pursuant to the bill's provisions, as specified.
2. Establish the Community Hardening Commission as an independent unit within the Department of Insurance, to be composed of specified members, including, among others, the Insurance Commissioner and the State Fire Marshal or Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency, or their designee.

iv. AB1 Residential property insurance: wildfire risk

1. Require the Department of Insurance, on or before January 1, 2030, and every 5 years thereafter, to consider whether or not to update its regulations to include additional building hardening measures for property-level mitigation efforts and communitywide wildfire mitigation programs. As part of this consideration, the bill would require the department to consult with specified agencies to identify additional building hardening measures to consider, as well as to develop and implement a public participation process during the evaluation

v. AB1457 Wildfires: training programs: defensible space: inspections

1. Existing law requires the department, until January 1, 2026, to develop and implement a training program for individuals to

support and augment the department in its defensible and home hardening assessment and public education efforts. Existing law requires the training program to do specified things.

2. This bill would require the training program to include training consistent with the "Home Ignition Zone/Defensible Space Inspector" course plan, established by the State Fire Marshal, to ensure that individuals are trained to conduct home ignition zone inspections. The bill would also extend the operative date of both programs described above indefinitely.

vi. SB662 Wildfires: defensible space: education efforts

1. Existing law requires the Director of Forestry and Fire Protection, until January 1, 2026, to establish a statewide program to allow qualifying entities to support and augment the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection in its defensible space and home hardening assessment and education efforts and requires the director to establish a common reporting platform that allows defensible space and home hardening assessment data, collected by qualifying entities, to be reported to the department, among other things.
2. Existing law requires the department, until January 1, 2026, to develop and implement a training program to train individuals to support and augment the department in its defensible and home hardening assessment and public education efforts.
3. This bill would extend those programs to January 1, 2031.

vii. AB1143 State Fire Marshal: home hardening certification program

1. This bill would require, on or before January 1, 2027, the Office of the State Fire Marshal to develop a home hardening certification program that identifies the best appropriate combination of those listed products and construction assemblies, and other home hardening techniques, including defensible space, to substantially reduce the risk of loss during a fire. The bill would require the Office of the State Fire Marshal, for the purpose of developing the home hardening certification program, to convene and facilitate a workgroup, as specified. The bill would authorize the Office of the State Fire Marshal to expend funds from the Building Standards Administration Special Revolving Fund, upon an appropriation by the Legislature, for the purposes of developing the home hardening certification program and convening and facilitating the workgroup.

viii. SB499 Fire prevention: home hardening: defensible space: data usage

1. Existing law requires the Director of Forestry and Fire Protection, until January 1, 2026, to establish a statewide program to allow qualified entities to support and augment the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection in its defensible space and home hardening assessment and education efforts. Existing law



requires the director to establish a common reporting platform that allows defensible space and home hardening assessment data, collected by the qualified entities, to be reported to the department and requires the director to establish any necessary quality control measure to ensure that the assessment data is accurate and reliable. Existing law authorizes the director to use the assessment data, as specified.

2. This bill would instead require the director to use that assessment data, as specified.

ix. CWMP Pilot Program Next Steps

1. CWMP Funding Budget Act 2022 (AB-179) Funding \$13 Million
  - a. ~\$6 Million Committed to Siskiyou County for HMGP Grant ~\$24 million
  - b. ~\$7 Million Committed to Riverside County for HMGP Grant ~\$26 million
  - c. Both Projects submitted to FEMA on 11/21/2024 utilizing funding opportunity DR-4699-CA (California Severe Winter Storms, Straight-line Winds, Flooding, Landslides, and Mudslides) FEMA Review will take ~7-12 months.
2. SB-946, Personal Income Tax Law: Corporation Tax Law: exclusions: wildfire mitigation payments (2023-2024)
3. Proposition 4
  - a. Grants under the Home Hardening Program to retrofit, harden, or create defensible space for homes at high risk of wildfire in order to protect California communities
4. SECTION 1. Section 91510 of the Public Resources Code is amended to read
  - a. 91510. (a) Of the funds made available by Section 91500, \$135,000,000 shall be available, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to the Office of Emergency Services for a wildfire mitigation grant program. The Office of Emergency Services shall coordinate with the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection in administering these moneys. The grant program shall assist local and state agencies to leverage additional funds, including matching grants from federal agencies. Funds may be used to provide loans, rebates, direct assistance, and matching funds for projects that prevent wildfires, increase resilience, maintain existing wildfire risk reduction projects, reduce the risk of wildfires to communities, or increase home or community hardening. Projects shall benefit disadvantaged communities, severely disadvantaged communities, or vulnerable populations.
- c. Receive Presentation on Joint Pilot Project to Build Economic Resilience in Wildfire-Prone Communities – J. Lopez
  - The CWMP continues the work to align with Insurance

Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS), California  
Department of Insurance (CDI), Housing and Community  
Development (HCD), Firewise

- i. CDI is working with InnSure to develop a proposal to explore different innovative insurance mechanisms to bring greater economic stability to wildfire prone communities
- Presenters:
  - i. California Department of Insurance
  - ii. InnSure
- Board Discussion and Direction regarding engagement and participation in Joint Pilot Project
- d. Discussion Regarding Updates and Revisions to CWMP Business Plan – J. Lopez
  - The Business plan should be reviewed annually
    - i. There are no major updates recommended at this time
    - ii. The Board will submit comments/suggestions at the March 2025 Board Meeting
      - 1. The Business Plan is a living document and can be updated as needed
      - 2. The document is for the Board only and does not require submission and approval from the Agency Directors
- e. Discussion and Action regarding CWMP Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement – J. Lopez
  - Adopt Resolution 2025-01 Recommending CWMP Member Agencies amend CWMP Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement
    - i. The current JPA Agreement sunsets in July 2025
    - ii. AB2069 passed to extend the JPA through July 2029
    - iii. The Agreement needs to be updated to reflect the new dates
    - iv. The Director's for both agencies have changed since the original document
    - v. The recommendation is to adopt resolution 2025-01 and submit the Agreement to the Directors for signature with the new dates, once signed, start the conversation for any further review and revisions by the directors

**Motion:** D. Berlant moved to adopt resolution 2025-01 and submit the amended JPA Agreement to the respective Directors for signature

F. Bigelow seconded the motion.

**Action:** Three in favor, One Absent, resolution adopted.

- f. Discussion and Action regarding advance funding request, grant agreements and subrecipient agreements - J. Lopez
- Adopt Resolution 2025-02 Authorizing Executive Director to execute advance funding request, grant agreements and subrecipient agreements

**Motion:** F. Bigelow moved to adopt resolution 2025-02 authorizing Executive Director to execute advance funding request, grant agreements and subrecipient agreements

A. Browning seconded the motion.

**Action:** Three in favor, One Absent, resolution adopted.

## **V. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

- a. A. Browning thankful to the teams for the work they have done. She wants to lift up the work from fire service and law professionals for the work done in Southern California in January, thankful that we have absolute best response organizations in the nation. Also, want to echo the comments and thanks to Chief O'Neil for his service and the work that he did.
- b. F. Bigelow appreciates the team for the status report, thankful for the information provided and for how comprehensive the report is.

## **VI. PUBLIC COMMENT**

- a. No public comments received.

## **VII. Meeting Adjournment – 11:30 AM**

The Next CWMP meeting is scheduled for March 19, 2025, at 10:00 a.m., CAL FIRE Natomas Training Center, 2860 Gateway Oaks Drive, Rooms 120/12, Sacramento, CA 95833 **(Location Updated as of 03/06/2025 - CAL FIRE Aviation Management Unit, 5411 Luce Avenue, McClellan, CA 95652)**