



June 5, 2024

The Honorable Isaac Bryan
Chair, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
California State Assembly
1020 N Street, Room 164
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 504 (Dodd) – SUPPORT
As Amended June 4, 2024**

Dear Assembly Member Bryan,

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), we support Assembly Bill 504, authored by Senator Bill Dodd. This measure clarifies that defensible space should be maintained in the State Responsibility Area under all weather conditions and allows for a 3-year phase-in of new ember-resistant zone standards for existing structures to account for staging of work and costs of compliance. RCRC is an association of forty rural California counties and the RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of elected supervisors from each member county.

Proper implementation and maintenance of defensible space around structures at risk of wildfire can have tremendous impacts on preventing ignitions and stopping the community-wide spread of fire during a high severity wildfire event. RCRC has been supportive of stricter defensible space standards, including the statewide implementation of a 5-foot ember-resistant zone around structures to help safeguard buildings from fire ignition. However, while we support these standards, we also recognize that property owners where structures currently exist may need some lead time to account for the costs of compliance and procure contractors to complete structural work where necessary. This is particularly true in socioeconomically disadvantaged communities where property owners may have particular difficulty with the costs of immediate compliance with the new standards.

SB 504 addresses these issues by allowing a 3-year window of lead time for existing structures to comply with the ember-resistant zone standards once they are finalized by the state. This lead-time not only allows property owners the ability to account

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for costs and labor necessary to comply with the standards, but affords CAL FIRE, CalOES, county governments and other relevant agencies valuable time to educate residents on the new standards and any assistance or programs that can aid them with meeting the requirements.

For the above reasons, RCRC supports SB 504 and urges your “aye” vote when this measure is heard before your committee. Please do not hesitate to contact me at sheaton@rcrcnet.org with any questions.



Sincerely,
STACI HEATON
Senior Policy Advocate

cc: The Honorable Bill Dodd, Member of the California State Senate
Members of the Assembly Natural Resources Committee
Lawrence Lingbloom, Chief Consultant, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
Casey Dunn, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus