



SAFRR

State Alliance for Firesafe Road Regulations

SAFRR Initial Victory Announcement and Acknowledgement for Stellar Support on Fire Safe Regs

The State Alliance for Firesafe Road Regulations (SAFRR) wishes to thank you for an apparent victory on Board of Forestry Fire Safe Regulations. To our surprise, the May 2022 proposal approved by the BOF reverted back to the January 2020 regulations (now in place). **The regulations will continue to apply to existing roads pursuant to the legal opinions of the Attorney General and the BOF's senior counsel, and require concurrent firefighter access and civilian evacuation. And the May 2022 regulations have the additions required by SB901 and now include very high fire hazard severity zone (VHFHSZ) in the LRA (Local Responsibility Area), and protections of undeveloped ridge tops, green belts and fuel breaks.**

We believe this milestone is a result of the pressure brought forth from the public, including testimony by several outspoken fire professionals and the work SAFRR completed that revealed the likelihood that the BOF's use of Categorical Exemptions under CEQA would be legally challenged and indefensible.

We will retain the funds raised by SAFRR to address anticipated challenges ahead. Although this is a WIN in many ways, we remain wary of possible additional actions by the BOF, Legislature, Natural Resources Agency or the Governor's office. For example, in 2021, there was an attempt to gut these regs through draft legislation (SB12) that would have limited the application of the regulations to “within the parcel”. Fortunately we were able to head off this end-run, which

would have rendered the regulations useless.

Fire professionals and SAFRR are requesting that the state develop and require a training program for all officials who have decision making authority concerning implementation of the Fire Safe Regulations, to address the current abuses such as granting exceptions to entire roads. If you want to know more, you can request a copy of recent comment letters to the BOF and Secretary Crowfoot from the intrepid wildfire professionals and SAFRR (ask maryleeguinson@gmail.com).

During the rulemaking process since 2020, anti-regulation interests lobbied the BOF to create loopholes and allocate broad discretion and authority to local jurisdictions to prioritize new development over public safety and loss of life. The public process was fraught with false narratives, which will likely be used to justify future changes. While these regulations are not perfect, we recognize this as a win and sincerely thank each of the individuals and organizations for their engagement in this apparent victory.

With gratitude!

SAFRR Directors

Craig Harrison

Debby Eppstein

Marylee Guinon

Steve Drimmer

Wendy-Sue Rosen