

Assembly Bill No. 1216

CHAPTER 688

An act to amend Section 51189 of the Government Code, and to amend Section 13108.5 of the Health and Safety Code, relating to fire safety.

[Approved by Governor October 8, 2003. Filed with Secretary of State October 9, 2003.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1216, Vargas. Fire safety: regulations.

(1) Existing law requires the State Fire Marshal, no later than July 1, 1996, in consultation with the Director of Forestry and Fire Protection, to prepare and adopt a model ordinance that provides for comprehensive space and structure defensibility, including in very high fire hazard severity zones.

This bill instead would require the State Fire Marshal, no later than January 1, 2005, in consultation with the Director of Forestry and Fire Protection and the Director of Housing and Community Development, to recommend building standards that provide for comprehensive space and structure defensibility from fires spreading from adjacent structures or vegetation.

(2) Existing law also requires the State Fire Marshal to propose, and the California Building Standards Commission to adopt, amend, and repeal regulations for openings into the attic areas of buildings in fire hazard severity zones, including very high fire hazard severity zones, as specified.

This bill, instead, would require the State Fire Marshal, in consultation with the Director of Forestry and Fire Protection and the Director of Housing and Community Development, to propose fire protection for roofs, exterior walls, structure projections, and structure openings.

The bill would also define "urban wildland interface community" and would provide that the building standards adopted pursuant to the bill also apply to those areas unless otherwise determined by a local agency following a specified finding supported by substantial evidence.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 51189 of the Government Code is amended to read:



51189. (a) The Legislature finds and declares that space and structure defensibility is essential to effective fire prevention. This defensibility extends beyond the vegetation management practices required by this chapter, and includes, but is not limited to, measures that increase the likelihood of a structure to withstand intrusion by fire, such as building design and construction requirements that use fire resistant building materials, and provide protection of structure projections, including, but not limited to, porches, decks, balconies and eaves, and structure openings, including, but not limited to, attic and eave vents and windows.

(b) No later than January 1, 2005, the State Fire Marshal, in consultation with the Director of Forestry and Fire Protection and the Director of Housing and Community Development, shall, pursuant to Section 18930 of the Health and Safety Code, recommend building standards that provide for comprehensive space and structure defensibility to protect structures from fires spreading from adjacent structures or vegetation and vegetation from fires spreading from adjacent structures.

SEC. 2. Section 13108.5 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:

13108.5. (a) The State Fire Marshal, in consultation with the Director of Forestry and Fire Protection and the Director of Housing and Community Development, shall, pursuant to Section 18930, propose fire protection building standards for roofs, exterior walls, structure projections, including, but not limited to, porches, decks, balconies and eaves, and structure openings, including, but not limited to, attic and eave vents and windows of buildings in fire hazard severity zones, including very high fire hazard severity zones designated by the Director of Forestry and Fire Protection pursuant to Article 9 (commencing with Section 4201) of Chapter 1 of Part 2 of Division 4 of the Public Resources Code.

(b) Building standards adopted pursuant to this section shall also apply to buildings located in very high fire hazard severity zones designated pursuant to Chapter 6.8 (commencing with Section 51175) of Part 1 of Division 1 of Title 5 of the Government Code, and other areas designated by a local agency following a finding supported by substantial evidence in the record that the requirements of the building standards adopted pursuant to this section are necessary for effective fire protection within the area.

(c) Building standards adopted pursuant to this section shall also apply to buildings located in urban wildland interface communities. A local agency may, at its discretion, include in or exclude from the requirements of these building standards any area in its jurisdiction



following a finding supported by substantial evidence in the record at a public hearing that the requirements of these building standards are necessary or not necessary, respectively, for effective fire protection within the area. Changes made by a local agency to an urban wildland interface community area following a finding supported by substantial evidence in the record shall be final and shall not be rebuttable.

(d) For purposes of subdivision (c), “urban wildland interface community” means a community listed in “Communities at Risk from Wild Fires,” produced by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Fire And Resource Assessment Program, pursuant to the National Fire Plan, federal Fiscal Year 2001 Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act (Public Law 106-291).

