
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anna Caballero, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 1143 (Bennett) - State Fire Marshal: home hardening certification program

Version: April 23, 2025

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: August 18, 2025

Policy Vote: G.O. 15 - 0, N.R. & W. 7 - 0

Mandate: No

Consultant: Janelle Miyashiro

Bill Summary: AB 1143 requires, by January 1, 2027, the State Fire Marshal's (SFM) Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Committee (WMAC) to develop a home hardening certification program that identifies home hardening measures that be implemented during renovation or property improvement projects, as specified.

Fiscal Impact: The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) reports costs of approximately \$2.31 million in year one and \$2.22 million in year two and ongoing to develop and implement the certification program (Building Standards Administration Special Revolving (BSA) Fund and General Fund).

Background: The SFM's WMAC provides a means of communication between the SFM, representatives of industry, state agencies, the fire service, and other stakeholders. WMAC provides a forum for addressing wildfire preparedness and mitigation issues of statewide concern, share best practices, seek comments and specific input on programs and technical issues, and inform local agencies and the public of applicable new laws and regulations. WMAC acts in an advisory capacity on the programs and activities of the Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Division and is chaired by the SFM.

Proposed Law: By January 1, 2027, requires the SFM's WMAC to develop a home hardening certification program that identifies home hardening measures, including defensible space, that be implemented during renovation or property improvement projects, or both, to substantially reduce the risk of loss during a fire and bring existing building stock into alignment with the provisions adopted in the California Building Code.

Staff Comments: CAL FIRE notes that the BSA Fund currently has a structural deficit. Any additional cost pressures to this fund will require additional funding support.

The BSA Fund is intended for use by the Building Standards Commission, Department of Housing and Community Development, and the SFM—upon appropriation by the Legislature—in the development of building standards, with an emphasis on the development, adoption, publication, updating, and educational efforts associated with green building standards. Each city and county in the state is required to collect a fee on permit applicants, in the amount of \$4 per every \$100,000 in valuation to be deposited into the BSA Fund.

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