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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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Bill No: SB 514  
Author: Cabaldon (D)  
Amended: 9/4/25 in Assembly  
Vote: 21

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SENATE NATURAL RES. & WATER COMMITTEE: 6-0, 4/8/25  
AYES: Limón, Seyarto, Allen, Hurtado, Laird, Stern  
NO VOTE RECORDED: Grove

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 6-0, 5/23/25  
AYES: Caballero, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab  
NO VOTE RECORDED: Dahle

SENATE FLOOR: 38-0, 5/29/25  
AYES: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Jones, Laird, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener  
NO VOTE RECORDED: Limón, Reyes

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 79-0, 9/8/25 - See last page for vote

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**SUBJECT:** Wildfire prevention: qualified entities: assessments: California Fire Service Training and Education Program Act

**SOURCE:** Author

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**DIGEST:** This bill authorizes the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM), as part of the California Fire Service Training and Education Program (FSTEP), to allow certification of contractors who conduct defensible space, home hardening, fuel reduction, roadside clearance, and other contracting activities for wildfire resiliency efforts and who have completed the above-described training program for qualified entities to support and augment the Department of Forestry and Fire

Protection (Department) in its defensible space and home hardening and education efforts or an equivalent program.

*Assembly Amendments*

- 1) Authorizes OSFM to certify contractors who conduct defensible space, home hardening, fuel reduction, roadside clearance, and other contracting activities for wildfire resiliency efforts and who have completed a training program.
- 2) Requires the OSFM's Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Committee (WMAC) to, by January 1, 2027, develop a home hardening certification program that identifies home hardening or defensible measures that can be implemented during renovation or property improvement projects.
- 3) Expands the types of qualified entities that can perform defensible space assessments and education to include nonprofit entities focused on wildfire resiliency.
- 4) Specifies that data collected by qualified entities shall not be used for compliance or enforcement purposes.
- 5) Repeals the sunset date for the qualified entities and trained volunteer programs.
- 6) Provides chaptering out amendments with AB 1143 (Bennett) and AB 1457 (Bryan).

**ANALYSIS:**

Existing law:

- 1) Requires the Department to establish a statewide program to allow qualified entities, as defined, to support and augment the Department's efforts in defensible space and home hardening assessments (Public Resources Code (PRC) §4291.5).
- 2) Requires the Department to establish a common reporting platform that allows qualified entities to submit assessment data (PRC §4291.5(c)).
- 3) Sunsets the qualified entities program on January 1, 2026 (PRC §4291.5(i)).

- 4) Requires the Department to implement a training program for individuals to support and augment defensible space and home hardening assessments and public education efforts (PRC §4291.6).
- 5) Sunsets the trained volunteer program on January 1, 2026 (PRC § 4291.6(d)).
- 6) Establishes the State Responsibility Area as the lands where the State has the financial responsibility for the prevention and suppression of wildfires (PRC § 4102).
- 7) Establishes requirements for “defensible space” around structures in the State Responsibility Area (PRC § 4291).

This bill:

- 1) Repeals the sunset provision in PRC § 4291.5.
- 2) Repeals the sunset provision in PRC § 4291.6.
- 3) Authorizes OSFM to certify contractors who conduct defensible space, home hardening, fuel reduction, roadside clearance, and other contracting activities for wildfire resiliency efforts and who have completed a training program.
- 4) Requires the OSFM’s Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Committee (WMAC) to, by January 1, 2027, develop a home hardening certification program that identifies home hardening or defensible measures that can be implemented during renovation or property improvement projects.
- 5) Expands the types of qualified entities that can perform defensible space assessments and education to include nonprofit entities focused on wildfire resiliency.
- 6) Authorizes qualified entities and trained volunteers to conduct assessments in the Local Responsibility Area (LRA).
- 7) Specifies that data collected by qualified entities shall not be used for compliance or enforcement purposes.
- 8) Provides chaptering out amendments with AB 1143 (Bennett) and AB 1457 (Bryan).

## Background

*Qualified Entities Program.* Existing law requires the Department to establish a statewide program to allowed qualified entities, as defined, to support and augment the Department's efforts in defensible space and home hardening assessments. Qualified entities are those who have completed training by the Department and received a certificate from the program. The Director of the Department is required to establish a common reporting platform that allows qualified entities to submit assessment data.

In the current fiscal year, qualified entities have conducted 1,480 defensible space assessments. The California Conservation Corps conducted most of them, 1,406; Fire Safe Councils conducted 25; and other qualified entities conducted 51. A plurality of the assessments (238) were conducted in El Dorado County; 194 in Nevada County; 183 in Mono County; 133 in Los Angeles County; and 131 in San Diego County. Other counties saw fewer than 100 assessments by qualified entities.

Existing law sunsets this program on January 1, 2026 (PRC §4291.5(i)).

*Trained Volunteers Program.* Existing law also requires the Department to implement a training program for individuals to support and augment defensible space and home hardening assessments and public education efforts (PRC §4291.6).

Existing law sunsets this program on January 1, 2026 (PRC §4291.6(d)).

## Comments

The Department acknowledges that the training program will create more face-to-face interaction and educational opportunities between homeowners and individuals who are trained in defensible space and home hardening. By expanding the program to the LRA, this bill will have a farther reach to more properties across the state to provide greater wildfire resilience.

SB 514 expands the list of qualified entities to include nonprofits and contractors, boosting the workforce that can skillfully inform and educate residents living in more urban areas in the LRA.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Appropriation: No   Fiscal Com.: Yes   Local: No

**SUPPORT:** (Verified 9/8/25)

Napa County  
Napa Communities Firewise Foundation

**OPPOSITION:** (Verified 9/8/25)

None received

**ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT:** According to the author, “Neighborhoods, communities, and property owners are implementing evidence-based steps to mitigate wildfire risk...This bill not only encourages individual action but also fosters collaboration across neighborhoods, local governments, and organizations...SB 514 will empower residents and officials to track progress, identify gaps, and set specific, measurable goals for improving wildfire safety.”

**ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION:** None received.

**ASSEMBLY FLOOR:**

Ayes: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

No Vote Recorded: Nguyen

Prepared by: Edith Hannigan / N.R. & W. / (916) 651-4116  
9/8/25 19:49:49

\*\*\*\* END \*\*\*\*