

RODEO-HERCULES FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Board of Directors, RODEO-HERCULES FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

FROM: David Stevens, CSG FIRE INSPECTOR

DATE: May 14, 2025

SUBJECT: First Reading of an Ordinance for the Designation of Fire Hazard Severity Zones within the Rodeo-Hercules Fire Protection District Pursuant to Government Code Section 51179

BACKGROUND

In alignment with the State of California's efforts to improve wildfire risk assessment and planning, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) updated the Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) maps for Local Responsibility Areas (LRAs). These maps are intended to reflect the most current scientific modeling of wildfire behavior, incorporating factors such as topography, vegetation, fire history, and weather patterns.

Pursuant to Government Code Section 51179, local jurisdictions are required to adopt these updated FHSZ designations by ordinance following CAL FIRE's identification of zones within their boundaries. This process ensures consistency between state and local wildfire planning efforts and provides the legal basis for implementing wildfire mitigation strategies, building standards, and public safety measures in fire-prone areas.

The updated FHSZ maps delineate zones of Moderate, High, and Very High fire hazard severity, and are used to inform defensible space requirements, emergency planning, and land-use decisions. The adoption of these maps does not change property ownership or land-use entitlements, but it may trigger additional requirements under the California Building Code, real estate disposition, purchase, and sale disclosure laws, and defensible space laws.

In accordance with CAL FIRE's public outreach and review process for the updated Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) maps, members of the public were provided opportunities to review the proposed maps and submit comments during the designated public comment period.

As part of the ordinance review and adoption process, public outreach was conducted to inform residents, property owners, and stakeholders within the Rodeo-Hercules Fire Protection District about the updated Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) maps and their potential implications.

Beginning on March 1, 2025, the District allowed public comments through the District's website; no comments have yet been received. The comment period will remain open through the second reading presently scheduled for the June 11, 2025, Board meeting.

The Rodeo-Hercules Fire Protection District fire prevention staff reviewed the updated CAL FIRE LRA FHSZ maps. Staff recommend that the Board of Directors proceed with the adoption process to ensure local alignment with state wildfire resilience efforts and to support continued public safety and community preparedness.

CONSEQUENCE OF NEGATIVE ACTION

Failure to adopt the proposed ordinance designating Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) as identified by CAL FIRE pursuant to Government Code Section 51179 may result in significant consequences to include non-compliance with State Law and reduced alignment with state wildfire mitigation standards

RECOMMENDATION

Conduct the first reading of the proposed ordinance by title only, waiving the full reading of the text.

Attachments

1. City of Hercules and Unincorporated Contra Costa Maps
2. Ordinance 2025-01 – Fire Hazard Severity Zones