



**EL DORADO COUNTY FIRE CHIEFS'
ASSOCIATION**
4040 Carson Road Camino, CA 95709

January 30, 2024

El Dorado County Board of Supervisors
330 Fair Lane
Placerville, CA 95667

Subject: Letter of Support for Defensible Space Ordinance

Dear El Dorado County Board of Supervisors,

I am writing on behalf of the El Dorado County Fire Chiefs to express our full support for the proposed updates to the Defensible Space Ordinance. As fire professionals, we understand the critical importance of proactive measures to protect our community from the devastating effects of wildfires.

El Dorado County has experienced its fair share of wildfires in recent years, causing significant damage to property and posing a threat to the safety of our residents. We firmly believe that updating our existing Defensible Space Ordinance is a necessary step towards mitigating the risks associated with wildfires and safeguarding our community.

Creating defensible space around structures is proven to be one of the most effective ways to reduce the vulnerability of homes and properties to wildfire. By establishing clear guidelines and requirements for property owners to maintain a defensible space, the proposed updates will strengthen our collective ability to prevent the spread of wildfires and enhance the safety of our community.

The El Dorado County Fire Chiefs fully endorse the Defensible Space Ordinance updates and commend the efforts of the Defensible Space Working Group in spearheading this initiative. We believe that by adopting the updated ordinance, El Dorado County will be taking a proactive stance in wildfire prevention and protection, setting an example for other communities facing similar challenges.

We understand that implementing ordinance updates requires education and outreach efforts to ensure compliance and understanding among property owners. We are committed

to working closely with the County of El Dorado and the Office of Wildfire Preparedness and Resilience to provide support, resources, and expertise in promoting the importance of defensible space and helping residents comply with the requirements.

In conclusion, we firmly believe that the Defensible Space Ordinance will significantly enhance our community's resilience to wildfires and protect the lives and properties of our residents. We urge you to consider our support and actively promote the adoption of this important measure.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to working together to make our community safer and more resilient.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Cordero', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tim Cordero
El Dorado County Fire Chiefs Association



El Dorado County Fire Safe Council

Website: edcfiresafe.org

515 Main Street, Ste. 103

Placerville, CA 95667

Email: board@edcfiresafe.org

General Information: (530) 647-1700

Assistance Programs: (530) 957-6270

COUNCIL "Public and Private Partners Working Together to Protect People, Homes, and Natural Resources"

February 21, 2024

Dear El Dorado County Board of Supervisors,

The El Dorado County Fire Safe Council (EDCFSC) supports El Dorado County's effort to update Ordinance 5186, Hazardous Vegetation and Defensible Space. The EDCFSC has been a standing member of the Defensible Space Working Group from its inception and has been an active participant in the Ordinance 5186 update process. The EDCFSC has provided regular updates to our members and stakeholders regarding the status of the ordinance revision during our monthly board meetings over the last 18 months.

The principles behind the California Public Resources Code (PRC 4291) addressing defensible space and County Ordinance 5186 are at the core of the EDCFSC mission. They are based on research and experience from the all-too-many lessons learned as to why homes are burning in wildland fires. Defensible Space is a key responsibility shared by every homeowner living in the wildland areas of California. Our education, outreach and assistance programs to homeowners are framed around the principles of these codes and ordinances.

EDCFSC supports the proposed updates to the Hazardous Vegetation and Defensible Space Ordinance (5186) and the County's emphasis on implementation through education and assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Hugh Council". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Hugh Council

Vice Chair

El Dorado County Fire Safe Council



Taxpayers Association of El Dorado County

April 20, 2024

**County of El Dorado
Office of Wildfire Preparedness and Resilience
360 Fair Lane, Building B
Placerville CA, 95667**

Re: Proposed County Ordinance 5186 Hazardous Vegetation and Defensible Space – Review and Response

To Whom It May Concern:

Wildfire is the largest single threat to the safety of County residents, their property and the county's economic vitality. We support actions taken by individual property owners, and public entities that help to reduce the wildfire threat.

Unfortunately, there are local residents who are not good stewards of the land. In addition, there are absentee owners, land speculators and developers who have little or no incentive to maintain the hazardous vegetation on their property. We believe this ordinance will provide an incentive for all property owners to fulfill their responsibility to remove or reduce hazardous vegetation on their property. Unmanaged vegetation is a significant factor in wildfire risk, fuels reduction and good stewardship of all lands and is imperative to help protect homeowners, communities and our economic foundation.

Also, some low-income, fixed-income individuals, veterans, and seniors may not be able to afford to adequately maintain their property. So, any funds collected from fines or administrative penalties pursuant to this ordinance, which exceed the costs of investigation and enforcement, shall be directed to provide funding for programs that provide defensive space support to low income individuals, veterans, and seniors.

While the County currently has a vegetation management ordinance, it needs to be strengthened to allow for uniform requirements, clear lines of responsibility and adequate

enforcement, we believe the revised ordinance moves the County toward accomplishment of these goals.

Therefore, the Taxpayers Association of El Dorado County supports the proposed ordinance but feel some revisions are necessary to promote clarity, fairness, and understanding. We suggest the following changes be made:

1. Section 8.09.055 Collection of Administration Fines or Fees
 - a. This section currently requires payment within 30 days. **We believe a 60-day period would be more reasonable and allow property owners to obtain funds to pay the fee.**

2. Section 8.09.070 Duty to Remove and Abate Hazardous Vegetation and Combustible Material D (5)
 - a. **We believe the portion of the Good Neighbor and Neighborhood Protection Policy including unimproved Parcels struck from the ordinance should remain including the example.** It establishes the tone and context of this section. Without it, the cooperative relationship between Responsible Party and Neighbor is not established! The added language appropriately places the Responsible Party in charge of the work to be performed and to pursue the Neighborhood Protection from the Neighbor.

 - b. Added language should also include: **Neighbor shall be responsible to provide access to the property required under the Defensible Space visual inspection review. Neighbor shall determine best access to the work area. In a large acreage setting, if a fence needs to be cut to gain more direct access to the Neighbor's property, upon completion of work, it shall be repaired to a similar or better condition. If domestic animals exist within the neighbor's property that might otherwise escape through the fence opening, it will be prevented.**

3. Section 8.09.100 Enforcement
 - a. The **meet and confer option** is an excellent alternative to fees and fines. Voluntary compliance is the objective. **We believe it should be mandatory, not at the discretion of the enforcement official.**

4. Section 8.09.110 Enforcement Procedures B (3) (c)
 - a. The requirement to remove the hazardous material within 15 days of the mailing of the notice is insufficient for a willing property owner to comply. **We believe a 60-day window for the homeowner to abate the problem is more appropriate.**

Thank you for working to make sure all property owners, private, state and federal, Neighbors and Neighborhoods, become good stewards of the land and work together to reduce the risk and consequences of wildfire in our County.

Respectfully,



Kris Payne

President, El Dorado County Taxpayers Association