



**PRESS RELEASE**

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September 12, 2019

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**Friedman Bill to Curb the Damage Done by Wildfire Heads to Governor’s Desk**

SACRAMENTO – On Tuesday, the Legislature passed Assembly Bill 1516, a measure by Assemblymember Laura Friedman (D-Glendale) that will make homes and communities more resilient to wildfires.

During 2017 and 2018 California experienced the largest fires ever recorded in its history. In 2017, over 1.3 million acres burned in high-severity wildfires and over 10,000 structures were destroyed. In 2018, over 1.8 million acres burned and over 22,700 structures were destroyed. Over one hundred Californians have died from wildfires over the last two years. The legislation was inspired by the findings of firefighting experts after investigating the sites where these wildfires had hit the hardest.

“In the aftermath of the recent wildfires, we learned a lot of tough lessons,” said Assemblymember Friedman. “We’ve found that defensible space has proven one of the most vital factors in whether or not a home survives. It’s time to strengthen our laws and give our communities the support that they need, and I hope the Governor agrees and signs this bill into law.”

Taking from those hard-learned lessons, AB 1516 would create new defensible space requirements for homes in communities that are at the greatest risk of wildfire. Under the bill, California will develop “ember-resistant zones” for the first 0-5 feet around homes and guidance regarding ignition-resistance materials to improve the chances of a home surviving a wildfire.

In order to assist homeowners, localities, and firefighting agencies with the new requirements, the measure provides resources by making grants available through CAL FIRE for at-risk communities and by developing a risk model for local governments to use in their own fire prevention planning.

Additionally, AB 1516 authorizes CAL FIRE to provide technical assistance to local governments, produces a guidebook to provide landowners options of vegetation that would never grow into powerlines and cause fires, as well as requires CAL FIRE to devise a plan on how they can realistically inspect every property that lies within the State Responsibility Area at least once every three years. With these improvements to how wildfire prevention is managed across the state, supporters anticipate a reduction in the property damage and lives lost to wildfires.

AB 1516 has received bipartisan support in the legislature and has the support of the California Fire Chiefs Association, the Nature Conservancy, the Sierra Club, Resource Conservation Districts, local governments, fire safe councils, the building industry, and the insurance industry. AB 1516 has no opposition.

The bill is now awaiting a signature from Governor Newsom.

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*Laura Friedman represents the 43rd Assembly District which encompasses the cities of Burbank, Glendale, and La Cañada Flintridge, as well as the communities of La Crescenta and Montrose, and the Los Angeles neighborhoods of Atwater Village, Beachwood Canyon, Los Feliz, East Hollywood, Franklin Hills, and Silver Lake.*