

Submitter: Robert Hart
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or SB85
Topic:

I am opposed to SB 85 as written. The initial objection is that the bill includes non government organizations (NGO's) awarding grants. It is not appropriate to have a non government agency giving and administering monies from government sources. Local government and fire districts at the direction of the State Fire Marshal should be the only groups authorized. The local government and fire district has elections and are responsible to the voter. An NGO has no safeguards in this respect.

Standards being optional for Defensive Space and Home Hardening will vary in each jurisdiction. There is no way that anyone other than the regulating agency should be involved in a grant process to reduce wildfire risk. The second objection is the use of "stakeholders" as a consultant working with the State Fire Marshal. A "stakeholder" is not an elected or otherwise representative of citizens. They have no authority to select or make requirements for "potential grantee organizations". This does not provide equal protection under the law for the expending tax dollars. Sub Section 6 should not include NGO's as part of the grant awarding process. I also oppose the creation of a Homeowners Insurance Risk Reduction Certification Program as this will intrude into the business of the insurance industry to evaluate property for them to enter into an insurance agreement. It is not government business to force itself into a private agreement. The provisions in SB 82 that regulates the issue of insurance companies and homeowners regarding fire is adequate to address the relationship and responsibilities between insurance carriers and home owners. With the passage of the bills before the legislature to make standards such as Defensive Space and Home Hardening optional for each local government based on existing local requirements and optional requirements from model ordinances that can be adopted in whole or in part, the standards will vary through out the state. There is not one standard for the issuance of a Certification.

While well intended, this bill does not provide equal standards and protection and the granting of funds based on this unequal set of standards is not acceptable. I urge a no vote on the adoption of this bill.