

Defensible Space, Zone Zero, and the New Fire Hazard Severity Zones and their impact for you

AB 3074 (passed in 2020) called for the Bureau of Forestry to develop regulations that create and enforce, a defensible “ember-resistant zones” within “Zone Zero” (ZZ) of homes in areas of high fire danger. “Zone Zero” is defined as the first 5’ from the structure. While ZZ did not pass yet as a state law, some communities like Berkley and Paradise have enacted the stricter form of Zone 0, without broad community approval. Zone 1(30’) and 2(100’) have allowance for vegetation with specific regulations.

The Board of Forestry (BOF) established a ZZ advisory committee to develop these regulations, and accept public comments. The main drive behind these new regulations is IBHS (Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety) and Cal Fire. They are listening to fire experts, lobbyist, scientists, and the public, but are pushing heavily toward selective evidence recommending a strict Zone 0. Ample long-term scientific research and evidence on the ground show that moisture in “greenbelts” around structures and communities (including properly-maintained and watered plants and trees) protect homes and structures during a fire. Scientist and arborists reject the strict vegetation removal, and show that the main cause of urban fires is Structure Separation Distance (density), not vegetation factors.

Your comments are needed. BOF needs to hear from you!

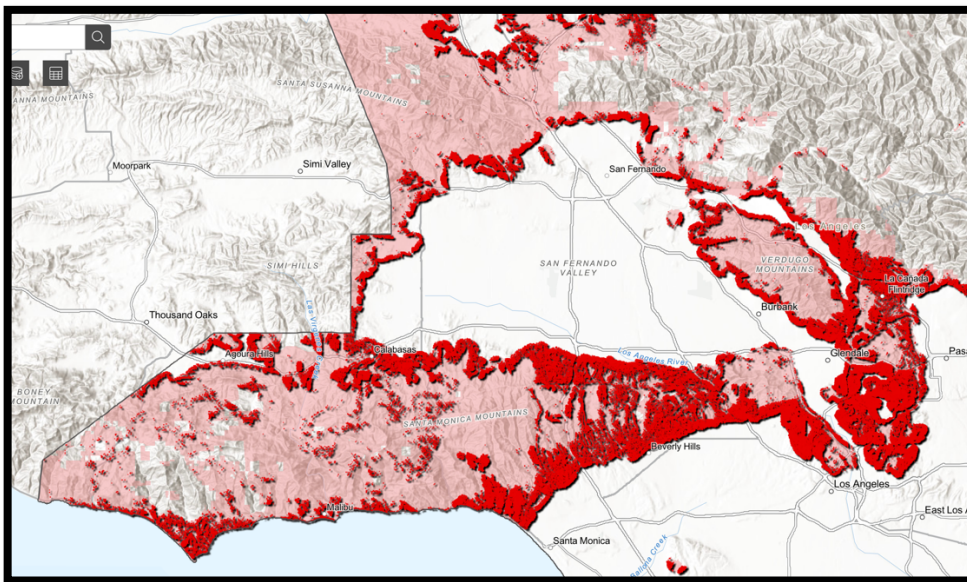
Gavin Newsom wants to sign these regulations by Dec 31 2025. ZZ will take effects immediately upon signing, for new structures. Existing structures will have 3 years to comply. If regulations are not passed at the State level by January 2026, LA city intends to make Zone Zero an emergency legislative mandate. Council File 10-2468 S2.
Insurance industry may enforce sooner or deny coverage.

The State of California and LA County have introduced new Very High Severity Fire Zone maps.

Areas included will have to comply with ZZ and remove nearly all vegetation, and replace with concrete, gravel or rocks.

Trees in ZZ will need to be trimmed 5’ away from home and 10’ away from chimneys. Millions of trees will be lost statewide.

No landscape allowed in Zone 0. Potted plants have restrictions. Strict regulations apply to wooden or ignitable fences, sheds and other ignitable materials. For more info, read full regulation at BOF site. Link at bottom of page



(Image)VERY HIGH SEVERITY FIRE ZONE MAP. Red indicates impacted trees in Zone 0

Total acreage marked in red-
3477 acres of impacted trees.

Protected trees are NOT exempt from ZZ

ZZ will be exempt from any environmental review!

Zone 0 has some common-sense regulations that are already part of the yearly brush clearance:

Remove dead branches, leaves accumulated on roofs, wood piles, and ignitable dead material. Healthy vegetation is conserved.

Negative impacts resulting from Zone Zero:

- Extreme financial burden for millions of homes, ranging from \$5K-100K. Fines, liens, inability to appeal.
- Rising utility bills as a result of shade loss, exposure and heat. Burden on our infrastructure.
- Loss of privacy, cool shade, clean air, beauty.
- Extreme negative environmental impacts: natural habitat loss for millions of creatures with no oversight or EIRs.
- Home values will suffer. Homeowners that cannot afford ZZ, will sell at a loss.
- Insurance company will have more reasons to deny coverage.
- ONE SIZE FITS ALL is extreme. It must fit each community's geography climate and needs.

Zone 0 (5 feet) and zone 1(30 feet from home) should allow well maintained hydrated vegetation and hedges.

ZZ should focus on home hardening as the main factor behind home survival and help with access to grants.

WE NEED MORE TREES TO LOWER HEAT IN URBAN ENVIRONMENTS. TREES ARE NOT THE ENEMY

To Send comments to the Board of Forestry:

PublicComments@bof.ca.gov

More information about Zone Zero can be found at

www.zonezerofacts.org.

<https://bof.fire.ca.gov/projects-and-programs/defensible-space-zones-0-1-and-2>