



# URGENT ITEM AGENDA MATERIAL

Government Code Section 54954.2(b)  
Rules of Procedure Chapter III.C.5

**THIS ITEM IS NOT YET AGENDIZED AND MAY OR MAY NOT BE ACCEPTED FOR THE AGENDA AS A LATE ITEM, SUBJECT TO THE CITY COUNCIL'S DISCRETION ACCORDING TO BROWN ACT RULES**

**Meeting Date: July 27, 2021**

**Item Description: Support of AB 9: Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation**

This item is submitted pursuant to the provision checked below:

- Emergency Situation (54954.2(b)(1) - majority vote required)**  
*Determination by a majority vote of the legislative body that an emergency situation exists, as defined in Section 54956.5.*
- Immediate Action Required (54954.2(b)(2) - two-thirds vote required)**  
*There is a need to take immediate action and the need for action came to the attention of the local agency subsequent to the agenda for this meeting being posted.*

Once the item is added to the agenda (Consent or Action) it must be passed by the standard required vote threshold (majority, two-thirds, or 7/9).

**Facts supporting the addition of the item to the agenda under Section 54954.2(b) and Chapter III.C.5 of the Rules of Procedure:**

The need for action came to the attention of the Council subsequent to the agenda for this meeting being posted. There is a need to take immediate action, as the state's legislative deadline for bills to be passed will be prior to the next meeting of the Council after recess. The City of Berkeley is a city that is both at high wildfire risk and dedicated to wildfire preparedness and mitigation, and should have the opportunity to weigh in on this bill.



CITY COUNCILMEMBER  
**RIGEL ROBINSON**  
DISTRICT 7

CONSENT CALENDAR

July 27, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
From: Councilmember Rigel Robinson and Councilmember Wengraf (Co-Sponsor)  
Subject: Support of AB 9: Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation

RECOMMENDATION

Send a letter of support to Assemblymember Jim Wood, Senator Nancy Skinner, and Assemblymember Buffy Wicks in support of Assembly Bill 9, which aims to focus the state's community preparedness and mitigation efforts, including assistance to local jurisdictions, by establishing new programs and operational structures within the Department of Conservation and the Office of the State Fire Marshal.

BACKGROUND

In the past decade, California wildfires have worsened in both magnitude and frequency — the 2020 California fire season was record-breaking in terms of acreage burned.<sup>1</sup> The City of Berkeley continues to be impacted by devastating wildfires and wildfire risks, whether in our own city or due to smoke from neighboring blazes.

AB 9 would codify the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity (RFFC) Program and establish the Community Wildfire Mitigation Assistance Program, create a deputy director of Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation, and establish a Wildfire Advisory Committee. The new programs would provide block grants for regional leadership, as well as assist local jurisdictions in navigating wildfire preparedness and prevention, funding opportunities, best practices, and the development of safety elements. This bill would create organizational focus within CalFire and ensure that there are dedicated, ongoing staff and leadership working on wildfire preparedness and mitigation.

The response to California's complex wildfire crisis must focus on not only crisis response and fire suppression, but also proactively fostering community engagement and preparedness in each region. Pending legislative appropriation, AB 9 would provide flexible block grants, authorization, and support to help regional entities deliver on projects and create their own fire awareness and protection programs that support their unique ecologies.

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<https://www.fire.ca.gov/incidents/2020/#:~:text=As%20of%20the%20end%20of.gigafire%22%20as%20the%20area%20burned>

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

No impact.

CONTACT PERSON

Councilmember Rigel Robinson, (510) 981-7170

Lianna Leung, Intern

Attachments:

1: AB 9 Letter of Support

2: Bill text:

[https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=202120220AB9](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220AB9)

July 27, 2021

The Honorable Jim Wood  
California State Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 6005  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Support for AB 9: Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation**

Dear Assemblymember Wood,

The Berkeley City Council would like to convey its full support for AB 9, an important bill for building up the state's wildfire mitigation apparatus and creating fire adapted communities across California.

Over the past decade, California's wildfires have increased steeply in magnitude and frequency. The 2020 wildfires were record-setting, burning over 4.2 million acres of land and marking the worst fire season in the state's modern history. The City of Berkeley is one of many cities at high risk of wildfire, as the Berkeley Hills have been recognized as "hazardous" by the federal government for their dry climate and vegetation.

The response to California's complex wildfire crisis must focus on not only crisis response and fire suppression, but also proactively fostering community engagement and preparedness through coordinated, dedicated state-level leadership. Regional efforts to develop fire mitigation programs will also be supported by AB 9 and are key in addressing California's unique ecology and wildfire risks.

The City of Berkeley supports AB 9 and thanks you for introducing this piece of legislation to protect communities from wildfire.

Sincerely,

The Berkeley City Council

CC: Senator Nancy Skinner  
Assemblymember Buffy Wicks