



City of Santa Barbara

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The Honorable Susan Rubio
California State Capitol
1021 O Street, Suite 4650
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 616 (Rubio) Community Hardening Commission: Wildfire Mitigation Program
City of Santa Barbara – Notice of Support**

Dear Senator Rubio:

On behalf of the City of Santa Barbara, I am writing to express our strong support for Senate Bill 616, which would establish the Community Hardening Commission within the California Department of Insurance to advance wildfire mitigation and community resilience efforts across the state.

As a city situated at the intersection of the wildland-urban interface, Santa Barbara has repeatedly faced the threat and reality of catastrophic wildfire. Events such as the Thomas, Cave, and Alisal fires have underscored the urgent need for forward-looking, community-based mitigation strategies that protect lives, homes, infrastructure, and natural resources. SB 616 takes an essential step toward institutionalizing that vision.

The bill's creation of a Community Hardening Commission ensures that wildfire mitigation policies are guided by collaboration among experts, local governments, insurance professionals, and community leaders. This inclusive approach will enable the state to deploy limited resources more effectively, promote equitable access to fire prevention programs, and support locally tailored solutions that reflect on-the-ground realities.

Importantly, SB 616 prioritizes investments in home hardening, defensible space, and fire-resilient infrastructure—strategies that align directly with the City's local hazard mitigation planning and climate adaptation goals. The Commission will also serve a critical role in advising on the implementation of programs such as the California Safe Homes Grant Program (AB 888), helping ensure that mitigation efforts are transparent, accountable, and rooted in best practices.

By formalizing a long-term commitment to wildfire prevention and resilience, SB 616 supports safer communities, a more stable insurance market, and a more prepared California.

The City of Santa Barbara thanks you for your leadership and is proud to support SB 616.

Sincerely,

Mayor Randy Rowse
City of Santa Barbara

cc: Senator Monique Limón
Assemblymember Gregg Hart