



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: September 16, 2025

Item Description: Letter to Governor – SB-326, AB-1143, AB-888

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:

These three bills passed the Legislature on Friday, September 12, 2025. This letter to the Governor, encourages him to sign the bills, which are on his desk now and can be signed or vetoed anytime between September 15 and October 12, 2025.



Brent Blackaby
Councilmember District 6

CONSENT CALENDAR
September 16, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmember Brent Blackaby (Author)
Subject: Letter of Support to Governor– SB-326, AB-1143, AB-888

RECOMMENDATION

Send a letter to Governor Newsom in support of SB-326 (Becker), AB-1143 (Bennett) and AB-888 (Calderon), with a cc to the authors, Assemblymember Wicks and Senator Arreguín.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

SB-326 (Becker), AB-1143 (Bennett) and AB-888 (Calderon), three bills supporting wildfire risk mitigation, passed in the Legislature on Friday, September 12th and are now awaiting the Governor's signature.

SB 326 would establish a Wildfire Risk Mitigation Planning Framework, providing the data foundation to target investments where they will make the greatest impact, including inspection support and homeowner assistance funds.

AB 1143 would champion home hardening with a home hardening certification program, supporting residents to implement the most effect home hardening measures during renovation.

AB 888 would bring financial support for home hardening to residents by establishing the California Safe Homes grant program.

BACKGROUND

The City of Berkeley has long been on the frontlines of California's wildfire challenge. Our hills are home to thousands of residents living in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, and our city has taken proactive steps to address this risk. Most recently, Berkeley adopted one of the state's first comprehensive Zone 0 ordinances, requiring ember-resistant defensible space within five feet of structures.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

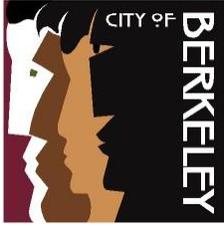
These bills, if passed, will greatly help Berkeley residents as well as all Californian's make their communities less likely to burn in a firestorm, contributing to better air quality and better health for our climate.

CONTACT PERSON

Councilmember Brent Blackaby Council District 6 510-981-7160

Attachments:

1: Letter



Brent Blackaby
Councilmember District 6

September 16, 2025

Governor Newsom
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 326 (Becker), as amended August 29th, 2025, Wildfire safety: fire protection building standards: defensible space requirements: The California Wildfire Mitigation Strategic Planning Act; SUPPORT

RE: AB-1143 (Bennett), as amended August 29th, 2025, State Fire Marshal: home hardening certification program; SUPPORT

RE: AB-888 (Calderon), as amended August 29th, 2025, California Safe Homes grant program: SUPPORT

Dear Honorable Governor Gavin Newsom,

The Berkeley City Council is writing in strong support of Senate Bill 326 (Becker), Assembly Bill 1143 (Bennett) and Assembly Bill 888 (Calderon). Berkeley has long been on the frontlines of California's wildfire challenge. Our hills are home to thousands of residents living in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, and our city has taken proactive steps to address this risk.

Most recently, Berkeley adopted one of the state's first comprehensive Zone 0 ordinances, requiring ember-resistant defensible space within five feet of structures. We paired this regulatory step with a robust public education campaign, technical assistance for homeowners, and the development of financial support mechanisms to make compliance achievable. This experience has underscored a critical lesson: successful wildfire mitigation depends not only on strong standards but also on ensuring communities have the resources, education, and buy-in necessary to implement them.

SB 326 reflects this approach at the statewide level. By establishing a Wildfire Risk Mitigation Planning Framework, the bill provides the data foundation to target investments where they will make the greatest impact. By accelerating Zone 0 adoption for existing homes, while providing local governments with inspection support and homeowner assistance funds, SB 326 ensures that standards are translated into real-world risk reduction. It links requirements directly to the science of home ignition and ember exposure.

AB 1143 champions home hardening measures, which, in combination with Zone 0 measures, will make California's homes far less likely to ignite during an ember storm. By establishing a *State Fire Marshal's Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Committee* to develop a home hardening certification program, residents will gain education and buy-in on the most effective home

hardening measures to implement during a renovation, and contribute to bringing housing stock in the Wildland Urban Interface closer to compliance with Chapter 7a.

AB 888 would bring home hardening financial support to residents. By establishing the California Safe Homes grant program, to be developed by the Department of Insurance, qualifying applicants would be prioritized for their home hardening projects.

From Berkeley's perspective, tying Zone 0 adoption to financial support and community education is critical to reducing risk and restoring insurability for homeowners. Likewise, accelerating home hardening through state mandate, guidance and financial support, will make our state more fire safe.

California has led the nation in confronting climate and wildfire risk, but the costs of inaction are measured daily in destroyed homes, rising insurance premiums, and lives at risk. SB 326, AB 1143 and AB 888 each offer a framework for meaningful, measurable risk reduction. We urge your support for these bills.

Sincerely,

The Berkeley City Council:

Mayor Adena Ishii, Councilmember Brent Blackaby, Councilmember Rashi Kesarwani, Councilmember Ben Bartlett, Councilmember Terry Taplin, Councilmember Mark Humbert, Councilmember Cecilia Lunaparra, Councilmember Igor Tregub, Councilmember Shoshana O'Keefe

Cc:

Honorable Josh Becker, Senator
Honorable Steve Bennett, Assemblymember
Honorable Lisa Calderon, Assemblymember
Honorable Jesse Arreguín, Senator
Honorable Buffy Wicks, Assemblymember