Staff Overview: Revisions to Proposed Rule Text Defensible Space Zone 0 for July 24, 2025

# Overview

AB 3074 (Friedman) of 2020 required the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection to develop regulations adding an ember-resistant zone to the state’s defensible space regulations. The statute called for this new “Zone 0” to require more intensive mitigations within the first five feet of a home or other building to reduce the potential for structure ignition.

Following passage of AB 3074, Board staff began working with various stakeholders to develop a proposal for Zone 0. Since March 2025, the Board of Forestry’s Zone 0 Committee has held four public workshops to gather input and comments on draft regulatory text to establish the new ember-resistant zone, consistent with AB 3074, SB 504 of 2024 and the Governor’s Executive Order [N-18-25](https://bof.fire.ca.gov/media/pugiju54/eo-_urban-conflagration-n-18-25-final.pdf).

The Zone 0 Committee’s most recent version of the draft rule text reflects revisions made in response to public input. The Committee’s goal is to propose regulations for Board adoption that will create a safer, less fire-prone environment, thereby reducing the likelihood and vulnerability of structures and neighborhoods to fires. The Committee recognizes, however, the need to balance numerous potentially competing interests, including the benefits of residential landscaping such as providing shade, habitat, and aesthetics.

Through public comment feedback and the best available science, the Committee also recognizes that local and regional differences exist in California, including variations in topography, climate, plant ecology, lot sizes, and structure density. These variations make it important to provide flexibility for local jurisdictions to develop alternative methods for compliance with Zone requirements, and these revisions reflect this need.

The Zone 0 committee encourages stakeholders and the public to provide feedback and propose revisions at the July 24 workshop or in writing at [PublicComments@bof.ca.gov](mailto:PublicComments@bof.ca.gov). Information on the workshop can be found [here](https://bof.fire.ca.gov/projects-and-programs/defensible-space-zones-0-1-2/).

# Summary of Key Revisions

**Trees:** The updated draft text clarifies that individual trees are allowed in Zone 0 provided they are well-pruned and maintained so as to effectively manage fuels and fuel ladders, consistent with Public Resources Code Section 4291. (**See Page 4, lines 1-25 of draft rule plead**)

**Alternative methods of compliance:** The updated draft text provides for alternative methods of compliance in both the State Responsibility Area and the Local Responsibility Area that take into account location variation. **(See Page 7, lines 21-24 of draft rule plead.)**