



October 1, 2025

Dear Wildfire Fund Administrator:

Please consider this contribution to the forthcoming study in furtherance of SB 254.

We are Fire Aside, the California company behind the nation's best preventive software tool to engage residents and fire agencies, enabling them to create a proactive risk reduction strategy to effectively mitigate wildfire.

Our software and services are already used by over 100 agencies across 12 states. Here in California, that includes the Berkeley Fire Department (Alameda County), the Nevada City Fire Department (Nevada County), and the City of Corona (Riverside County), among many others across our home state.

This comment seeks to respond to the following portion of the study:

Additional mitigation measures and technology solutions to reduce the risk of ignition of wildfires and limit the spread of damage from wildfires, including ideas for new programs, improved state and local catastrophic event response capability, home fire risk reduction standards, vegetation management practices, and communitywide wildfire hardening requirements. [PUC § 917(c)(3)&(8)]

Mitigating the risk of destructive wildfire is a unique social problem. It requires both personal action across a widespread area. Individual homeowners must take responsibility for their own property, and do the work of defensible space and home hardening. However, like biological herd immunity, this only works if a critical mass of action is reached. Unlike other natural disasters that California faces, notably earthquakes, it matters a lot what a community and town do, together.

Our solutions have already been validated in numerous parts of the state. Now, Fire Aside seeks to aid efforts to expand wildfire resiliency across California.

Fire Aside recently began a pilot with CAL FIRE across three units in San Diego, Nevada, Placer, Napa, Sonoma, and Sierra counties. The agency can now begin two-way communication with residents for the first time: receiving, tracking, and analyzing the mitigation work already being undertaken by Californians everywhere. Historically, after having conducted a defensible space inspection, fire agencies have very little insight as to what happens after an inspector leaves someone's doorstep.

In recent years, in Marin County, for instance, Fire Aside enabled the county's wildfire prevention authority to build a data-driven risk map of the entire county. Residents annually complete tens of thousands of corrective actions, contributing to measurable risk reduction

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across the community. When wildfires threaten homes with defensible space and hardened features they are far more likely to survive, preventing costly firefighting efforts, insurance claims, and disaster aid.

By empowering communities to harden homes and create defensible space, Fire Aside addresses critical workforce gaps, amplifies prevention efforts, and yields measurable returns on investment (ROI) through reduced disaster costs, improved insurance stability, and most importantly, lives and homes saved.

Fire Aside has already proven itself as an effective wildfire risk reduction tool. As a national wildfire preparedness platform, we are accessible to all fire departments, from small volunteer companies up to and including tribal, county, state, and federal fire agencies. We seek to expand to all California communities that are at-risk from destructive wildfire.

Put another way, we do not want to see another California home lost to such devastation.

Fire Aside's statewide deployment will drive a new era of risk reduction while also considerably lowering significant downstream economic impacts to individual homeowners, businesses, and local, state, and federal budgets.

Investing in Fire Aside as a statewide platform promises significant returns on investment in terms of disaster losses averted and community stability. By driving widespread adoption of mitigation measures, Fire Aside directly translates into homes and lives saved during wildfires, as well as substantial economic benefits from avoided destruction.

Fire Aside's greatest strength is how it galvanizes residents to participate in preventive wildfire risk reduction – creating and enhancing defensible space – alongside the work already done by fire agencies on public lands. A critical part of community wildfire resilience is private land owners taking priority actions on their property.

In short, Fire Aside makes adoption of wildfire defensible space easier, more efficient, and more comprehensive. After all, modern wildfire prevention isn't guesswork — it's mapped, measured, and reportable.

Fire Aside produces metrics that matter including how many homes in a community meet defensible space standards, how quickly issues are remedied, and how risk scores are trending.

A statewide-adopted Fire Aside platform could feed into a pan-California wildfire metrics dashboard, allowing leaders to track prevention progress. This step would demonstrate accountability and success of state investments in resilience in a transparent, data-driven manner.

This scientifically-proven approach of emphasizing defensible space has been known for

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decades. In April 2005, the Government Accountability Office, a non-partisan federal agency, [concluded](#):

“Recognizing that during severe wildland fires, suppression efforts alone cannot protect all homes threatened by wildland fire, firefighting agencies and others are increasing their emphasis on preventive approaches that help reduce the chance that wildland fires will ignite homes and other structures.”

Here in California, according to CAL FIRE, four of the five most destructive wildfires in our state’s history occurred within the last eight years. Two of the top five – the Eaton and Palisades Fires (both in Los Angeles County) – took place this year. ([FEMA alone has spent over \\$3 billion](#) from January to June 2025 in recovery costs just for these two most recent wildfires.)

As California has not learned its lessons of the past, the problem of destructive wildfire is only getting worse.

Fire Aside addresses this challenge by creating streamlined workflows and effectively turns this challenge into an opportunity by making every homeowner a partner in resilience. The platform generates personalized wildfire risk reports for each property after an assessment, pinpointing specific vulnerabilities (e.g. vegetation too close to structures, combustible materials, missing ember-resistant vents), thereby moving towards better defensible space.

Residents receive these interactive reports with clear recommendations and links to resources to fix the issues. Armed with this knowledge (and a “to-do” list tailored to their home), residents are motivated and empowered to take corrective actions by creating defensible space, hardening their homes, and maintaining preparedness year-round.

Indeed, communities using Fire Aside have seen dramatically higher engagement: residents are five times more likely to take defensible space and home hardening actions when guided by the platform¹.

Fire Aside not only multiplies the impact of a department’s fire prevention team, but also builds a culture of shared responsibility. Every cleared brush pile, trimmed tree, or upgraded vent by a resident directly reduces ignition hazards and improves the odds of a home survival.

Fire Aside is a vehicle to capture a positive ROI at scale. By simplifying and automating the process for home assessments and retrofits, it helps ensure that mitigation actually happens.

A statewide-backed rollout of Fire Aside would multiply these benefits nationwide. Communities would be better educated, more engaged, and ultimately, more fire-adapted.

Fire Aside believes that no home should ever be lost to wildfire, and we are working diligently

¹ Marin Wildfire 2023 Defensible Space & Home Hardening Program Annual Report



every day to make that vision a reality.

Fire Aside appreciates the opportunity to respond to SB 254 and looks forward to continuing to engage with your agency on this critical issue. If you have any questions, please contact me 415-209-5493 or govtaffairs@fireaside.com at your convenience.

Best,

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