

PRESS RELEASE

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COUNTY EARNS STATE FIRE RISK REDUCTION DESIGNATION

The County of Santa Cruz is pleased to announce it has earned statewide recognition through the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection's Fire Risk Reduction Community List, a designation that can help qualifying homeowners receive wildfire insurance discounts while making the County more competitive for millions of dollars in future wildfire prevention grants.

The designation was secured through the County's Office of Response, Recovery & Resilience (OR3) and Community Development & Infrastructure Department. OR3 engages countywide wildfire resilience coordination with CAL FIRE, local fire districts, Fire Safe Councils, the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, County departments and community organizations. OR3 also helps steward the County's Measure Q program which is a valuable resource passed by the voters in 2024 to support a more wildfire resilient Santa Cruz County.

"This recognition reflects years of work to make Santa Cruz County safer, better prepared and more competitive for wildfire prevention funding," OR3 Director David Reid said. "Just as importantly, it may help qualifying homeowners seek wildfire insurance premium discounts at a time when insurance costs are a major concern for local families."

Santa Cruz County has experienced firsthand the devastating impacts of wildfire. The 2020 CZU Fire destroyed homes, displaced residents and reshaped the region's understanding of wildfire risk. Since then, many residents have faced rising insurance premiums, non-renewals and increased reliance on the California FAIR Plan.

The Fire Risk Reduction Community designation may provide two primary benefits:



- Property owners in Santa Cruz County may qualify for wildfire insurance discounts. California Department of Insurance regulations require insurers to take Fire Risk Reduction Community status into account in their rating plans. Discount amounts vary by insurer and by property, and homeowners should contact their insurance provider to ask whether the designation applies to their policy.
- The designation strengthens the County's position when applying for CAL FIRE Wildfire Prevention Grants. These grants support projects such as hazardous fuels reduction, fuel breaks, chipping programs, prescribed grazing, wildfire planning, risk mapping and public education. Under current guidance, the priority applies when the County is the grant applicant.

The designation also supports the County's broader wildfire resilience strategy, including future Measure Q wildfire investments and ongoing work to coordinate planning, data, community outreach and project development across local agencies and partners. Voters entrusted the County to leverage their tax dollars to bring more resources to the County to improve fire safety and make the community more resilient to climate change. This designation will help that vision become reality.

Homeowners interested in pursuing potential insurance discounts should contact their insurance agent or provider and ask whether Santa Cruz County's Fire Risk Reduction Community designation can be applied to their policy.

The California Fire Risk Reduction Community List is maintained by the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection and recognizes local agencies that have demonstrated a strong commitment to reducing wildfire risk through planning, community engagement, wildfire mitigation, and implementation of state-recognized best practices. See <https://bof.fire.ca.gov/projects-and-programs/fire-risk-reduction-community-list> for more.