



CITY OF BANNING STAFF REPORT

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Robert Fisher, Acting City Manager

PREPARED BY: Mikki Sherry, Supervising Fire Marshal
David Newell, Community Development Director

MEETING DATE: June 24, 2025

SUBJECT: Consideration of Introduction and First Reading of Ordinance 1610, Adopting the Fire Hazard Severity Zones within the City of Banning Based on Maps Provided by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection by Amending the Banning Municipal Code Section 8.16.020 and Chapter 15.28

RECOMMENDATION:

Introduce by title only and waive further reading of Ordinance 1610.

BACKGROUND:

In 1992, Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) classification in the Local Responsibility Areas (LRA) was established with Assembly Bill (AB) 337 in response to the Panorama and Tunnel Fires. From 2008 to 2011, CAL FIRE worked to designate areas as Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ) within the Local Responsibility Area (LRA). During this time local governments were required to adopt the maps as recommended or adjust the recommendation to be more or even less restrictive.

In 2021, Senate Bill (SB) 63 expanded the scope of Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) classifications by mandating the identification of additional zones, including Moderate and High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, in addition to the existing Very High. In 2022, Assembly Bill (AB) 211, as codified in Government Code Section 51179, reinforced these mandates and required local agencies to formally designate, by ordinance, all three classifications within 120 days of receiving the recommendations from the State Fire Marshal. The bill also eliminated the local governments' ability to downgrade the hazard levels recommended by the State Fire Marshal.

The classification of Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) in California has evolved significantly over the past several decades in response to the increasing threat of wildfires. The State of California, through the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) and in collaboration with local jurisdictions, has developed a systematic approach to identifying and classifying areas based on their wildfire hazard potential.

Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) are designated based on the likelihood of fire occurring and its expected behavior over a 30 to 50-year period. These zones are determined using factors such as fuel loading, terrain, fire weather conditions, historical fire activity, and wind patterns.

The previous Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) maps in California were developed and adopted by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) to identify areas at significant risk of wildfires. These maps, which classify zones as moderate, high, or very high fire hazard severity, were originally created using fire history, topography, vegetation, and climate data. They were first

implemented in 2007 for State Responsibility Areas (SRA), where CAL FIRE has primary jurisdiction, and later incorporated into Local Responsibility Areas (LRA) through local government planning and building regulations. The adoption of these maps played a crucial role in guiding land-use decisions, establishing building codes, and informing mitigation efforts to reduce wildfire risks. However, as fire behavior has evolved due to climate change, prolonged drought, and increased development in wildland-urban interface (WUI) areas, the need for updated maps has become evident to ensure accurate risk assessments and effective fire prevention strategies.

JUSTIFICATION:

The designation of Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) under Government Code section 51178 requires local agencies to engage in a transparent and participatory process to ensure that affected communities have access to updated wildfire hazard information. The updated Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) maps were released on March 24, 2025, triggering the requirement for local agencies to make this information available for public review and comment within 30 days of receipt. In compliance with this requirement, the map was posted on the City of Banning’s website for public access and review on April 2, 2025. The City also held an informational workshop with the City Council on April 22, 2025.

Under Government Code Section 51179, cities and other local agencies are required to adopt the State’s Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) Map recommendation for Local Responsibility Areas (LRA’s) within 120 days of receiving them. Government Code section 51179(b)(3) prohibits any local agency from decreasing the severity of the zones as identified by the State Fire Marshal for any area within the jurisdiction.

To adopt the FHSZ Map, the draft ordinance proposes repealing Chapter 15.28, Fire Districts, and amending Chapter 8.16, Fire Protection Code. Chapter 15.28 of Title 15 (Buildings and Construction) includes old references that are no longer applicable and therefore requires repealing this Section. Chapter 8.16 is proposed to be amended by identifying the FHSZ Map received on March 24, 2025, as the City's adopted map within the paragraph referenced as Chapter 49 of Section 8.16.020.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact on the City of Banning.

ALTERNATIVES:

Do not introduce Ordinance 1610, to adopt the updated Local Responsibility Areas (LRA) Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) Map as mandated by the State.

BUDGETED?:

No

CONTRACT/AGREEMENT:

No

ATTACHMENTS:

1. [Ordinance 1610 Adopting City of Banning Fire Maps](#)
2. [City of Banning Local Responsibility Area Fire Hazard Severity Zones.pdf](#)
3. [Existing Chapter 8.16 Fire Protection Code](#)
4. [Existing Chapter 15.28 Fire Districts](#)