



PRESS RELEASE

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COUNTY SECURES CALIFORNIA FIRESAFE GRANT

The County of Santa Cruz Office of Response, Recovery and Resilience (OR3) is pleased to announce it has been awarded a \$175,000 California FireSafe Council grant to increase community preparedness in the face of increased wildfire threats.

The grant will fund a new position to coordinate and align neighborhood-level and landscape scale fire protection activities throughout the County in order to improve and expand local wildfire resilience, including hazardous fuel reduction efforts and sharing wildfire preparedness information and services across all socioeconomic groups, including underserved communities. The County's award was one of a handful across the state of California.

"The CZU Fire drove home the threat wildfire poses to many of our communities," Santa Cruz County Board Chair Bruce McPherson said. "Many of our residents have already taken steps to protect their neighborhoods from wildfire, and this grant helps us coordinate and support those efforts to make our County safer and more resilient place to live."

"I'm very pleased to receive this award from the California FireSafe Council. These are competitive grants, and being able to secure one, in collaboration with our County Fire Safe Council and the Resource Conservation District, on behalf of the community is an important step to equitably improving our fire resiliency efforts throughout the county," OR3 Director David Reid said.

Funding for the grant is provided by CAL FIRE. The grants prioritize counties with a high percentage of very high fire hazard severity zones, a history of damaging fires, and a higher proportion of disadvantaged and/or low-income communities.

Santa Cruz County is currently home to ten fire protection agencies, four Fire Safe Councils and 16 FireWise Communities, along with agencies such as the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, which helps manage fire prevention activities throughout the County.