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January 11, 2022

The Honorable Daniel Berlant

Office of the State Fire Marshal

C/O: FHSZ Comments

California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection

P.O. Box 944246

Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

Dear Acting Fire Marshal Daniel Berlant,

The South Orange County Economic Coalition (SOCEC) is the leading voice of business and economic vitality in our region, which creates $25 billion in economic activity annually. Undoubtedly, fire maps have a major impact on the communities and businesses they touch.

The newest Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) maps were released during the holiday season, and as such, the business community needs additional time to review and understand the mapping changes and the severity of their implications. Specifically, we ask that you consider adding a 60-day extension to the comment period so that comprehensive and constructive remarks can be recorded.

It has been 15 years since the last changes were implemented—and so it stands to reason that any changes implemented now could be in place for years without revision. It is pivotal that community and industry leaders be given sufficient time to examine this thoroughly before consequential changes are enacted.

SOCEC acknowledges the complexity of this process by which FHSZ maps are drawn and considered. There is no doubt that developing a methodology for measuring the reality of wildfire hazard has taken years of hard work and thorough research. It is for this reason that we believe there would be no negative consequences to extending the duration of time for discussion as we further evaluate the proposed maps.

Thank you greatly for your consideration. We greatly appreciate CalFire’s commitment to due diligence. If we can provide any additional information or if you have questions about this request, please do not hesitate to contact Executive Director Victoria Hernandez via email at Victoria@economiccoalition.com or via telephone at 949.440.1027.

Sincerely,

Victoria Hernandez

Executive Director

Kelley Lee

Chairwoman

Michael Balsamo

Past Chairman

Adam Wood

Advocacy Committee Chair

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