



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

SEP 29 2020

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 3164 without my signature.

This bill would require the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) to work with stakeholders and other governmental entities to develop a wildland-urban interface wildfire (WUI) risk model based on wildfire hazard severity information and a number of other local mitigating factors to determine fire risk to individual parcels and communities.

I am committed to aggressive fire prevention measures that will reliably and quickly reduce California's vulnerability to catastrophic wildfires. I commend Assemblymember Friedman for looking for creative ways to effectively study California's risk in order to advise local and state fire prevention.

Data-driven decisions and leveraging technology are critical to making our communities more resilient to the threat of wildfire. However, the amount of granular information that would be needed to provide an accurate representation of risk at the parcel level would be a significant workload for the State and local jurisdictions eventually assigned to gather the necessary data. Unlike CAL FIRE's existing fire hazard severity models, fire risk is dynamic and changes based on any number of variables such as whether rain gutters have been cleared of pine needles or dried out grasses have been trimmed away from a structure. As drafted, the bill prescribes mitigation factors and does not provide adequate flexibility for CAL FIRE to determine the appropriate factors for the dynamic risk the model is meant to evaluate.

I am therefore directing CAL FIRE to work with the Legislature to develop a strategy that would support the deployment of a wildfire risk model that allows for adequate discretion in the development of the model.

For this reason, I am returning Assembly Bill 3164 without my signature.

Sincerely,

Gavin Newsom

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gavin Newsom', is written over the printed name and extends across the page.