



**NEVADA
COUNTY**
CALIFORNIA



2022 Hazardous Vegetation Ordinance Update

Lead Defensible Space Inspector Roger Tucker

Wildfire Threats 2020-2021



- 6,873,327 ACRES BURNED
- 14,745 STRUCTURES BURNED
- 36 LIVES LOST



What Is Defensible Space?



- Zone-Based Fuel Reduction
- PRC 4291 – State Guideline

Defensible Space Inspection Program



- Full-Time Lead Defensible Space Inspector
- 1 Full-Time Defensible Space Inspector
- 2 Temporary Defensible Space Inspectors
- NCCFD Consultant Fire Marshal Patrick Mason

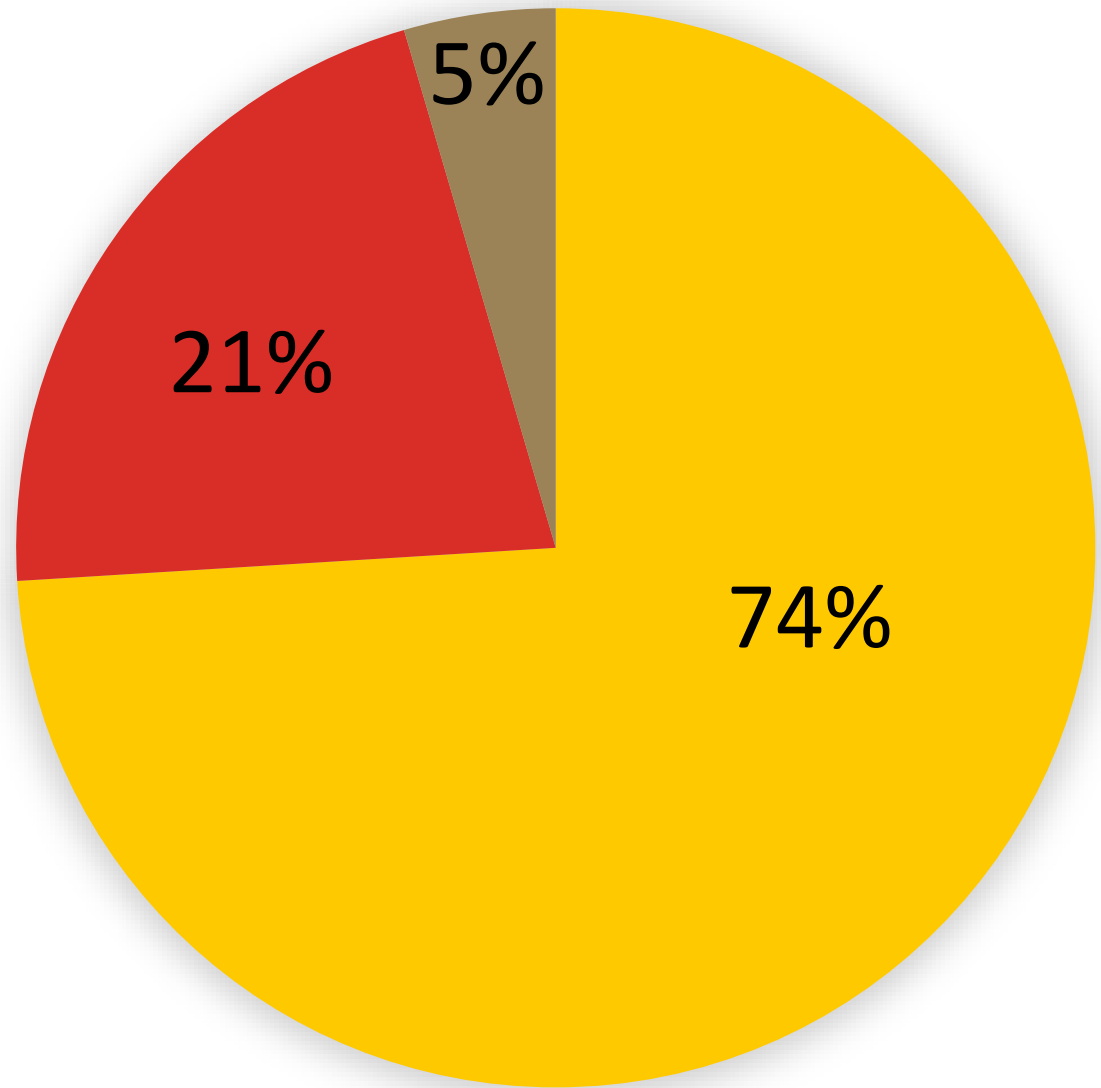
Nevada County Hazardous Vegetation Ordinance 2477

- Unincorporated Parcels/Roads
- Exceeds PRC 4291 guidelines
- Addresses adjacent properties
- 50/50 Cost share provision
- Focuses heavily on education



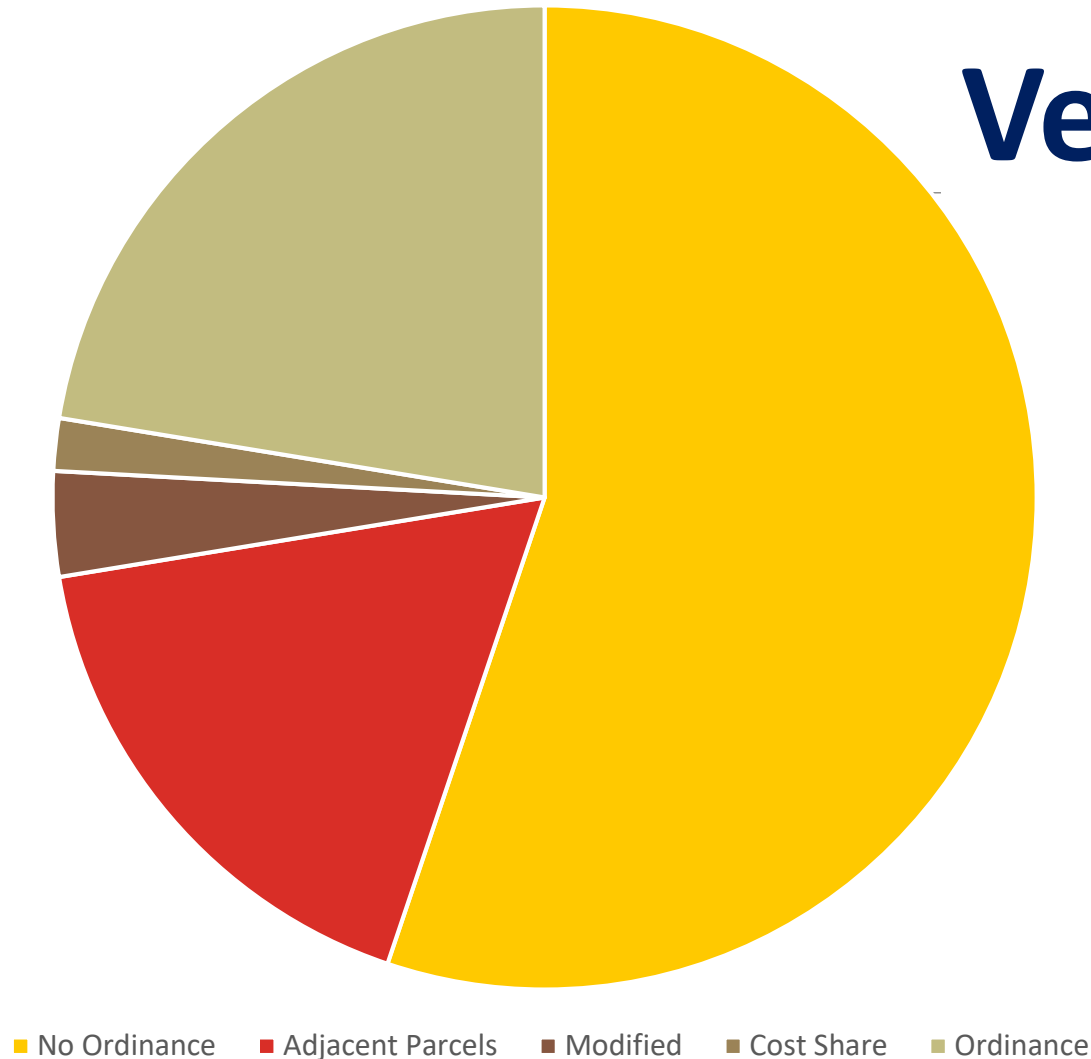


Defensible Space Cases 2021



- 359 Education-based compliance
- 104 Citation-based compliance
- 22 Referred to Code Enforcement
- **95% Compliance after education or citation**

ORDINANCES BY COUNTY



County Hazardous Vegetation Ordinances

- 32 Fall under PRC 4291
- 26 Have ordinance
- 10 Address adjacent parcels
- 2 Modified fuel area for open lands
- 1 Cost share provision

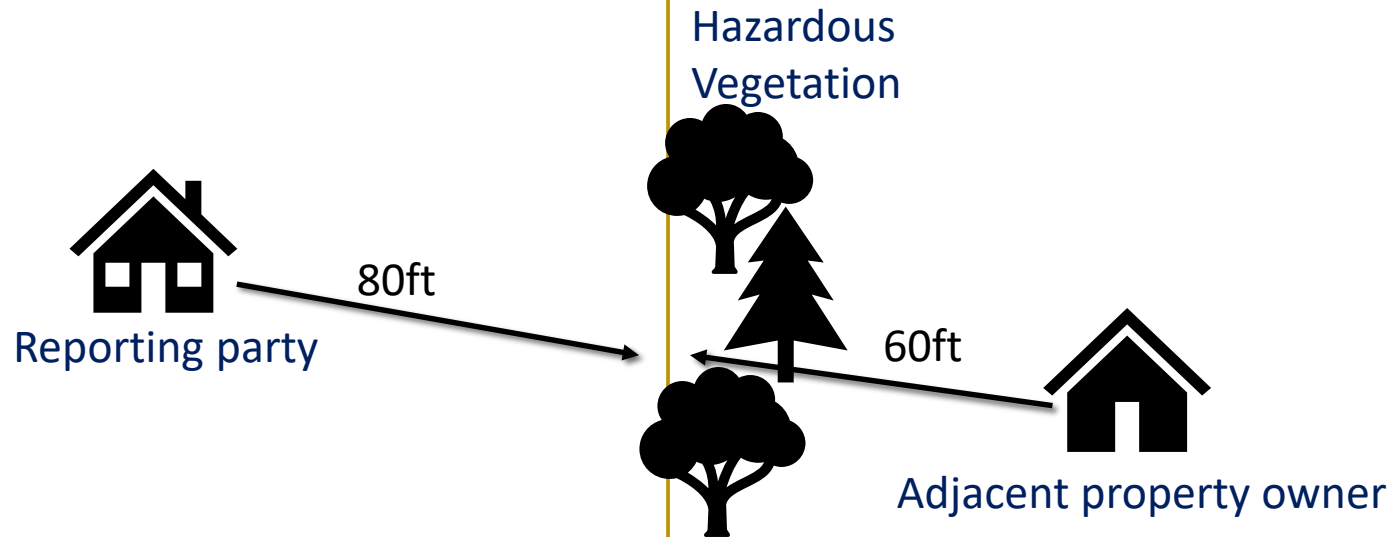


Potential Changes

- 50% Cost Share Removal
- ≤1 Acre Fuels Reduction
- Fuel on Open Lands
- 0-5ft Ember Resistant Zone



50% COST SHARE PROVISION DIAGRAM 1



50% cost share doesn't apply

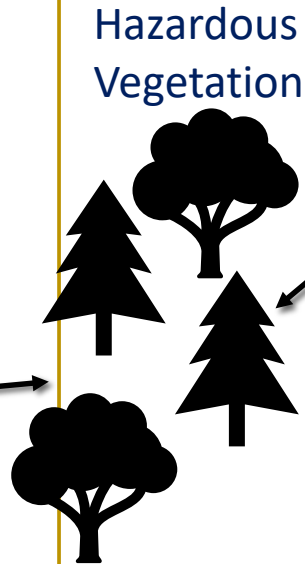
50% COST SHARE

Diagram 2



Reporting party

60ft



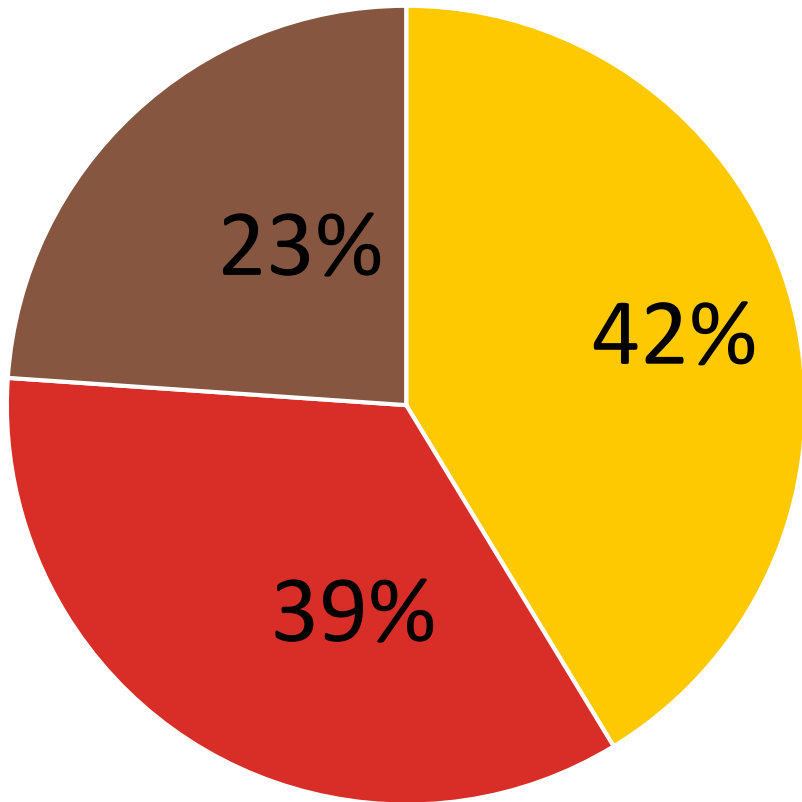
Adjacent Property Owner



200ft

Adjacent property owner can request the reporting party pay 50% of the cost

Question 1 feedback: Should the 50% cost share provision remain in the hazardous vegetation ordinance?

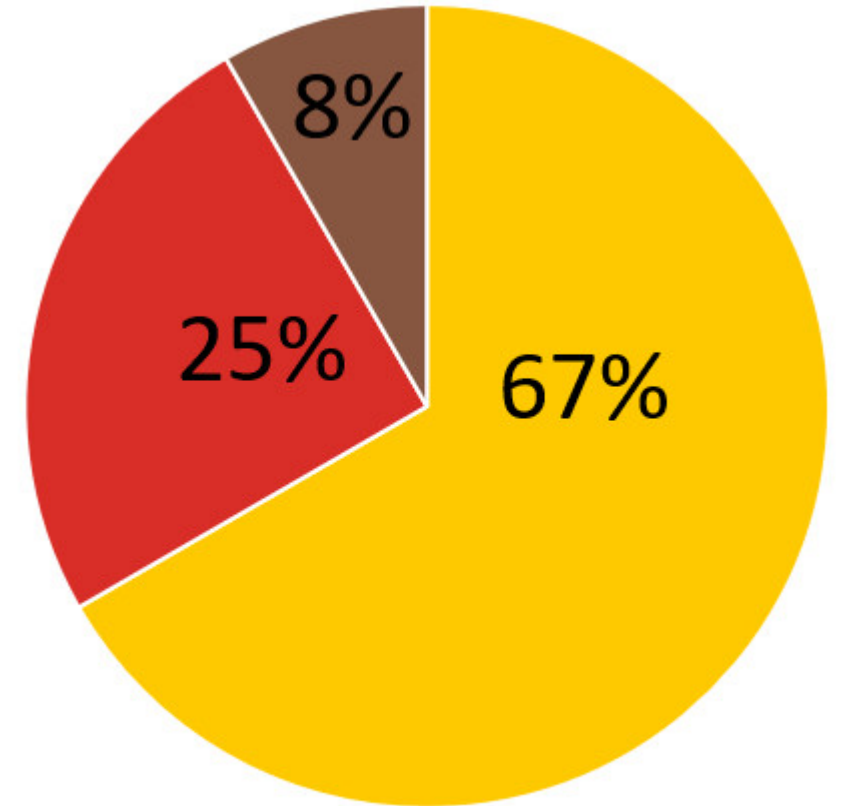


Public Feedback

YES

NO

UNDECIDED



Stakeholder Feedback

Pros and Cons of the Cost Share Provision

PROS

- Encourages neighbors to work together
- More equitable for both parties
- Prevents complaints for hazardous vegetation that doesn't directly impact the reporting party
- Helpful with frivolous complaints

CONS

- Can slow the process down since DSI is dealing with two parties to achieve compliance
- Negatively impacts the total number of parcels in the county that achieve a 100ft defensible space
- Estimated 10-12% of reporting parties choose not to proceed due to cost

Recommendation: Keep the 50% Cost Share Provision

Fuel On Open Lands



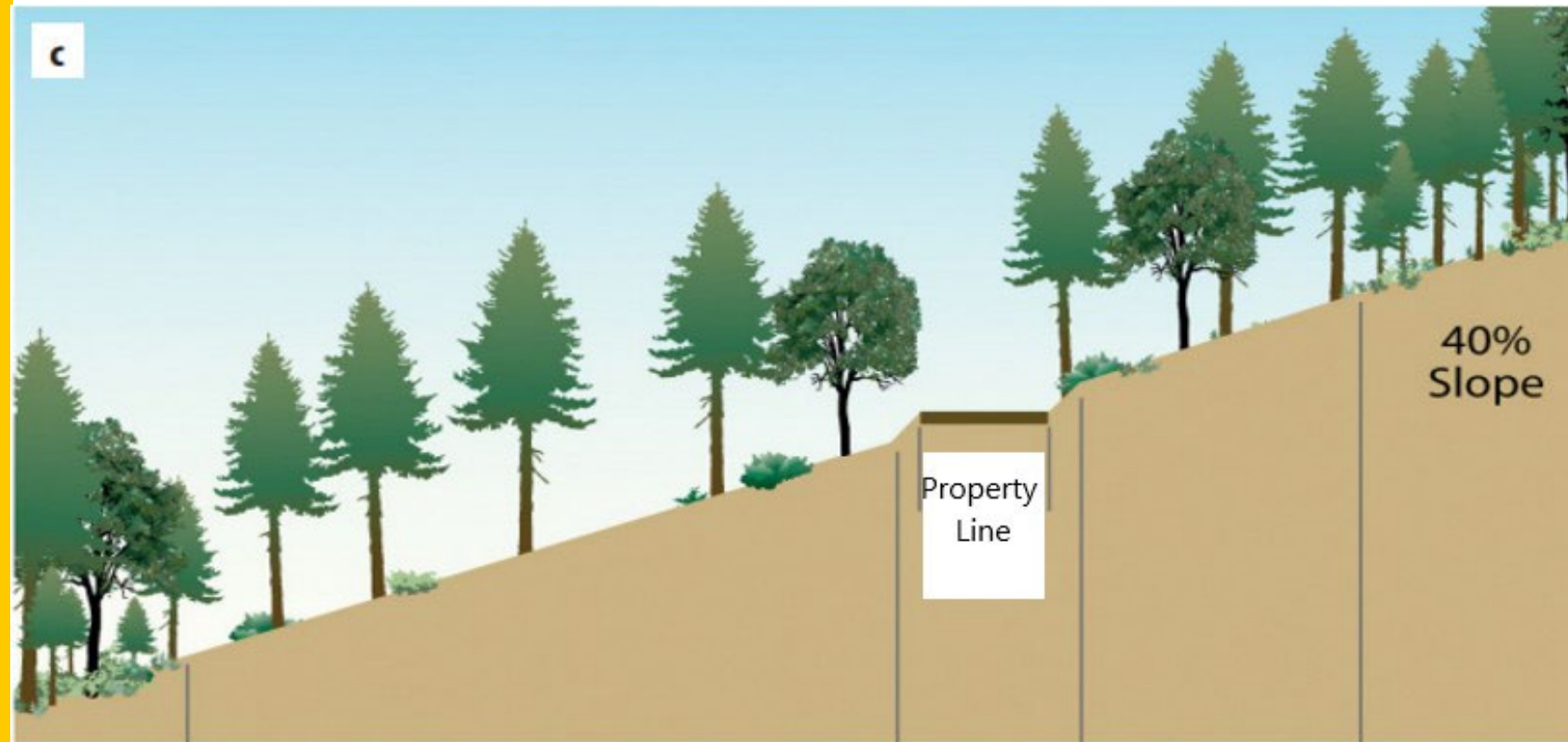
- Addressed in current ordinance to achieve 100' defensible space but with cost share provision
- 30' fuel reduction area along property lines of improved parcels
- Additional area could be requested to be abated at the discretion of the DSI

\$4-6k PER
ACRE

1 Acres =
43,560 Sqft
208' X 208'
30' X 1,452'

Shaded Fuel Reduction Area

A strip of land where fuel (living trees and brush, dead branches, needles, or downed logs) has been modified or reduced to limit the fire's ability to spread rapidly.



30' Fuel Reduction Area Diagram 3

Reporting Party



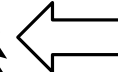
Parcel boundary line

30ft

30ft



20ft



50ft Fuel Reduction Area

Adjacent Property Owner

100ft



200ft

All property owners are responsible for maintaining a 30 ft fuel reduction area

Diagram 4

Improved parcel

Unimproved parcel



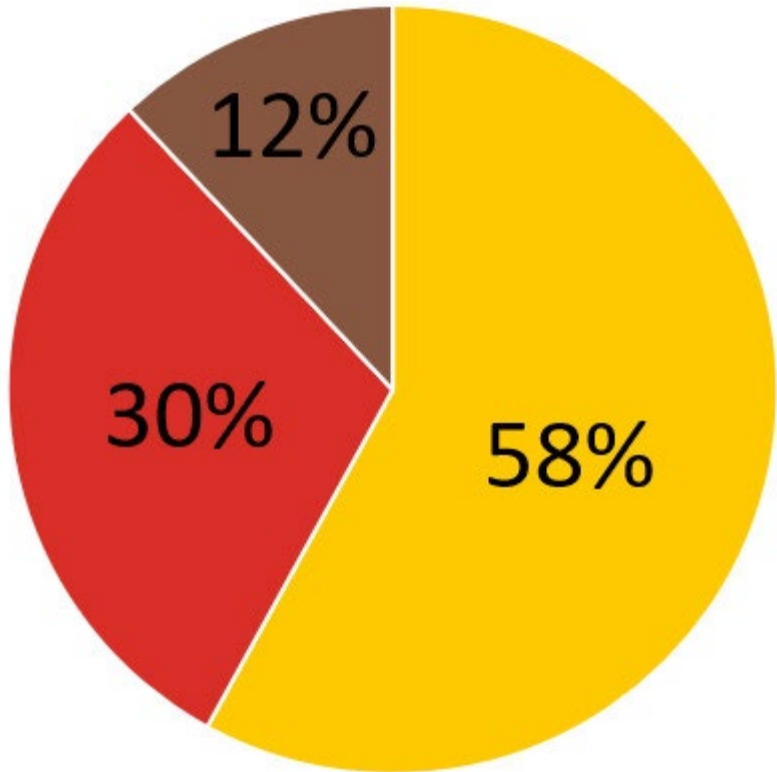
70ft

30ft Shaded fuel reduction area

Agricultural Crop

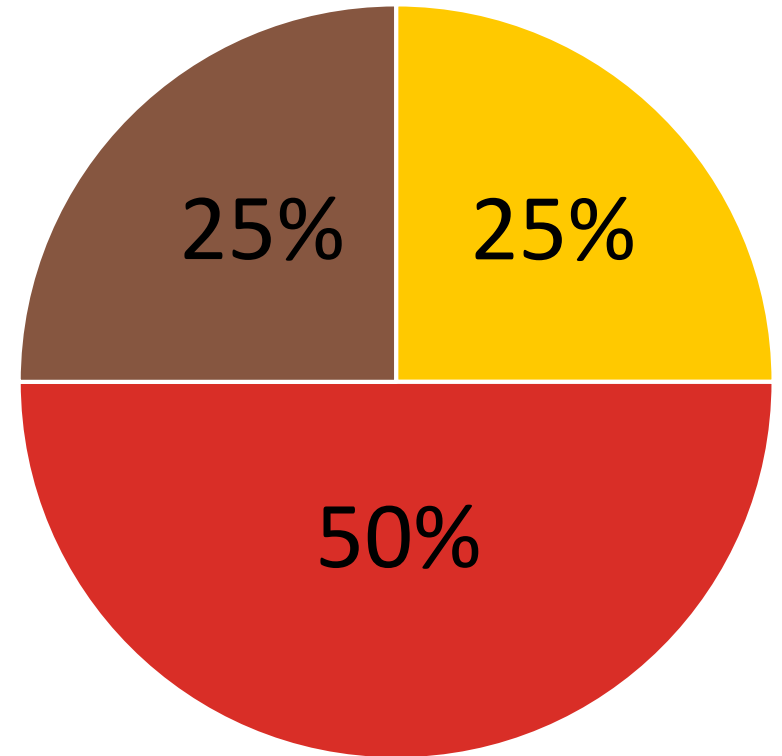
*The crop isn't required to be abated if within the 30ft of the parcel boundary of an adjacent improved parcel

Question 2 feedback: Should a 30ft fuel reduction area be required on all parcel property lines bordering improved parcels?



Public Feedback

YES
NO
UNDECIDED



Stakeholder Feedback

30ft Shaded Fuel Reduction



PROS

- Creates a safer space for fire fighters to directly attack the fire
- Potentially reduces the rate of fire spread (horizontal and vertical)

CONS

- Will create substantially more green waste
- Fire professionals disagree as to effectiveness
- Significantly more resources and workforce for community and county required
- Potential dump of green waste at 30'

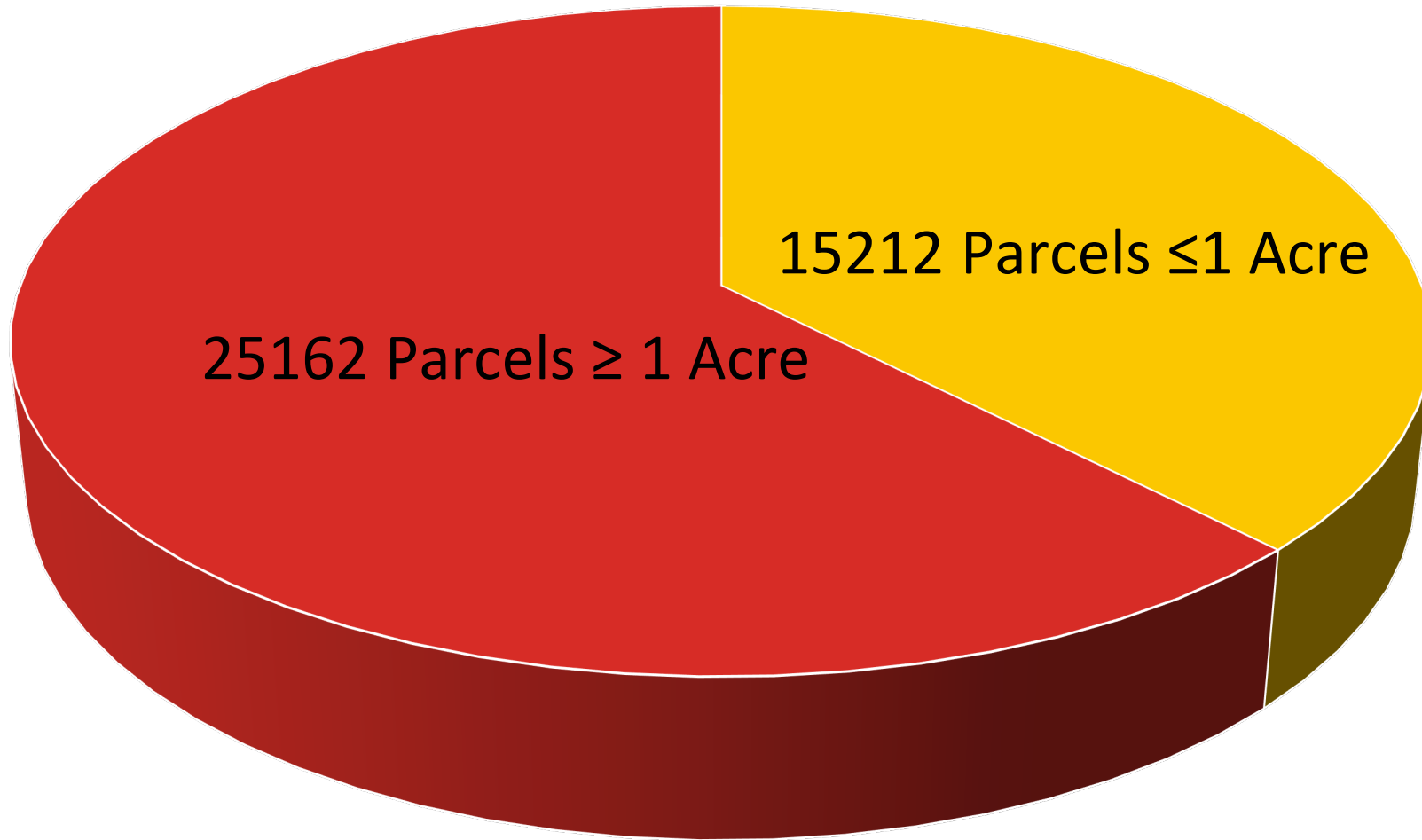
Recommendation: Do not adopt a 30' shaded fuel break for parcels bordering improved parcels.

Treating Hazardous Vegetation On Parcels \leq 1 Acre



- Extend the treatment guidelines for the 30'-100' zone to the parcel boundaries on parcels \leq 1 acre
- Applies to improved and unimproved parcels

Number of Parcels \leq or \geq 1 acre



≤1 Acre Fuel Reduction

Diagram 5



Structure # 1

Fully Treated

Improved Parcel ≤1 Acre

Unimproved Parcel
≤1 Acre

Fully Treated

Improved Parcel ≤1 Acre

Structure #2



15 ft

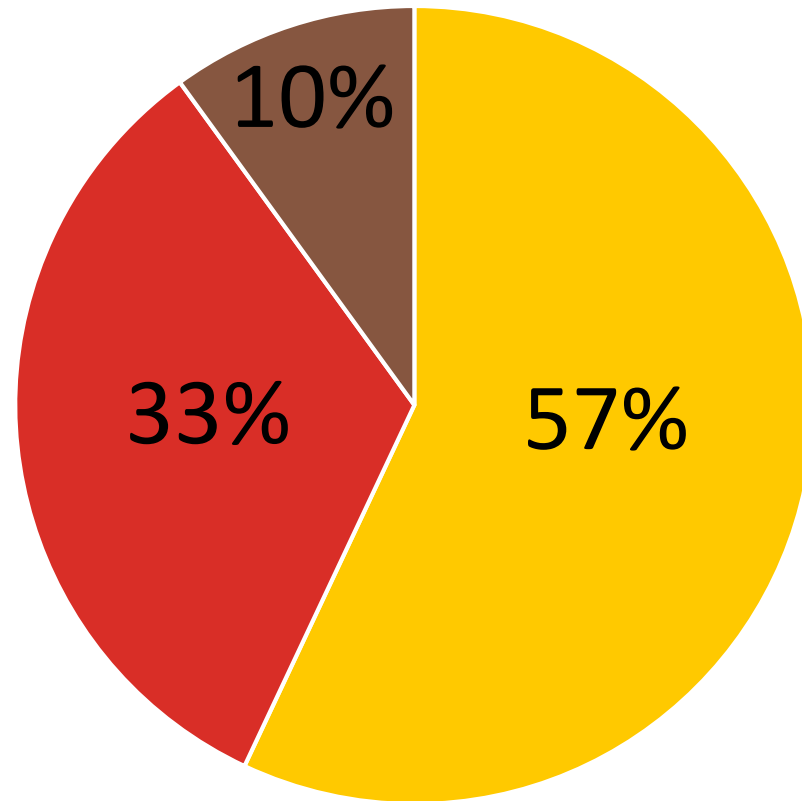
85 ft

Unimproved Parcel
>1 Acre

Fully Treated

Treated to 100' for
adjacent parcel

Question 3 Public Feedback: Should parcels ≤ 1 acre be required to create a fuel reduction area on the entire parcel?



YES

NO

UNDECIDED

Public Feedback



Full treatment of parcels ≤ 1 acre

PROS

- Targeted at densely populated areas
- Mitigates some of cost share issues
- Deals with vacant lots in subdivisions
- Larger impact for whole community

CONS

- Costs
- Increased green waste
- Increased workload for DSI program
- Increased demand for contractors

Recommendation: Require parcels ≤ 1 acre to fully treat entire parcel with DSI discretion

0-5' Ember Resistant Zone



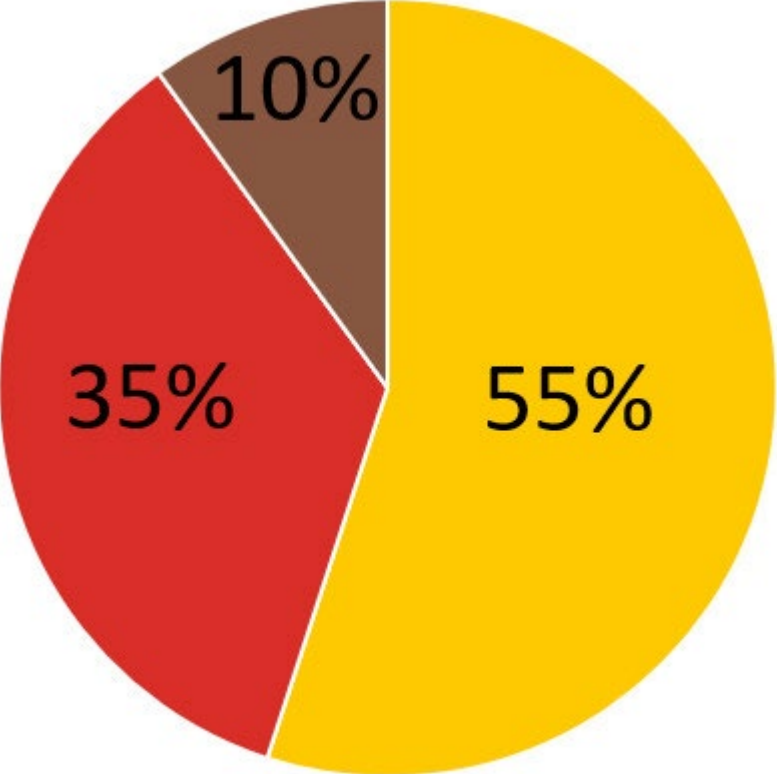
- Expected to be adopted into PRC 4291 in 2023/2024
- Most crucial to protect structures
- Work/reward benefit is high

0-5ft Ember Resistant Zone

- First layer of defense
- Embers responsible for 60-90% of home loss
- May have a greater impact on manufactured homes and retirement communities



Question 4 feedback: Should the hazardous vegetation ordinance be amended to require property owners to maintain a 5ft ember resistant zone adjacent to structures?

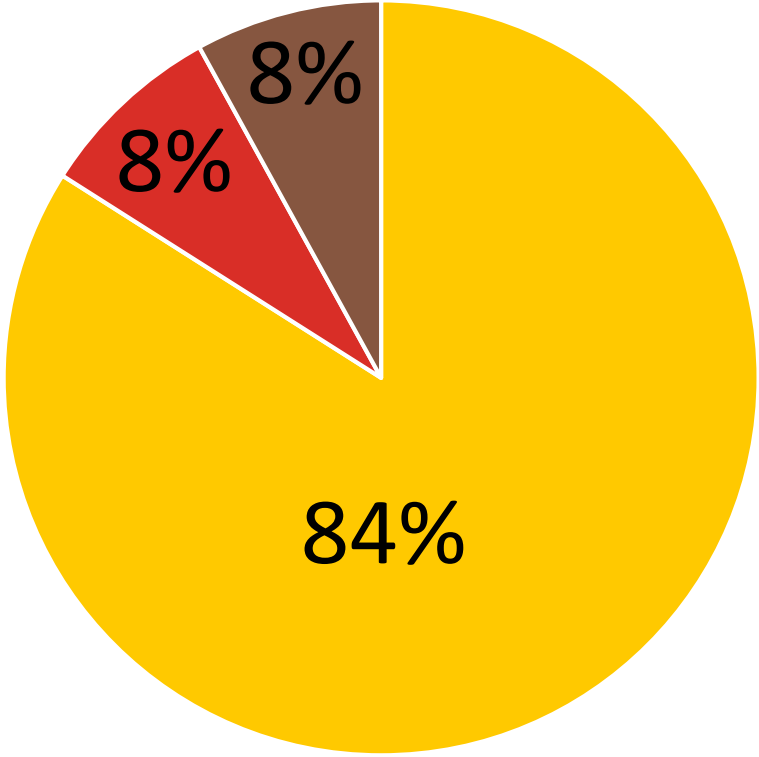


Public Feedback

YES

NO

UNDECIDED



Stakeholder Feedback

0-5' Ember Resistant Zone

PROS

- Most important zone for structures
- Small scale project compared to other zones
- Ordinance will be in line with approved PRC 4291 changes

CONS

- May impact 55 and older communities
- Limited contractors
- May drastically alter the landscape design/appearances

Recommendation: Adopt a 0-5' ember resistant zone into the ordinance



Authorized County Abatements

- 22 Cases qualified for abatement in 2021
- 1540 hours of staff time per year or $\frac{3}{4}$ of a full- time position
- May be several years before the county recoups abatement costs



Recommendation: Abatements should only be sought in the most egregious cases presenting serious risk to the public.

DSI Program Recommendations

- Keep the 50% Cost Share Provision
- Require parcels ≤ 1 acre to fully treat entire parcel
- Do not adopt a 30' fuel reduction area for parcels bordering improved parcels
- Adopt a 0-5' ember resistant zone into the ordinance
- Abatements should only be sought in the most egregious cases presenting serious risk to the public



Questions?

