



## **VENTURA COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Dustin Gardner  
Fire Chief  
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October 11, 2022

Board of Directors  
Ventura County Fire Protection District  
800 South Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

### **SUBJECT:**

Second Public Hearing Regarding Adoption of Ventura County Fire Protection District (Fire District) Ordinance No. 32 Repealing Ordinance No. 31, Adopting by Reference the 2022 California Fire Code, Portions of the 2021 Edition of the International Fire Code, and Portions of the California Code of Regulations, Title 19, with Additions, Deletions, and Amendments Thereto, and Incorporating by Reference Fire District Ordinance No. 29.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Adopt the attached Ventura County Fire Protection District (Fire District) Ordinance No. 32 which repeals Fire District Ordinance No. 31, adopts the 2022 California Fire Code (CFC), portions of the 2021 edition of the International Fire Code (IFC), and portions of the California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 19, with additions, deletions, and amendments thereto, and incorporates by reference Fire District Ordinance No. 29.
2. Authorize the Fire District to transmit Fire District Ordinance No. 32, as adopted, to the legislative bodies of the County of Ventura and each city member within the Fire District, for ratification of Chapter 5, Section 507, Chapter 9, Section 903, and Appendix B in accordance with the provisions of California Health and Safety Code (H&SC) Section 13869.7.

### **FISCAL/MANDATES IMPACT:**

There are no additional County costs associated with this Board action.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The Ventura County Fire Code currently in effect within the Fire District, pursuant to Fire District Ordinance No. 31, is the 2019 edition of the CFC and the 2018 edition of the IFC, as amended by your Board in 2019. The IFC was created in the late 1990s when the three national regional "legacy" codes (National Building Code, Uniform Building Code, and Standard Building Code) were merged into a single model code. This task took several years, and the first edition of the IFC was published in 2000. Since that time, a growing number of jurisdictions across the country have adopted it, modified it, and called it their own.

The state of California recently adopted and published the 2022 CFC, which is based on the 2021 IFC and becomes effective on January 1, 2023. All provisions of the 2022 CFC will be automatically applicable throughout the state on January 1, 2023, unless local jurisdictions amend one or more sections of the CFC.

The ordinance before your Board adopts an amended version of the 2022 CFC, as adopted by the California Building Standards Commission, portions of the 2021 edition of the IFC, as published by the International Code Council, and portions of CCR Title 19, with additions, deletions and amendments noted therein. It also incorporates Fire District Ordinance No. 29. The first hearing on the ordinance was held before your Board on September 13, 2022.

The CFC, IFC, CCR Title 19, and Fire District Ordinance No. 29 provide regulations necessary for the maintenance of fire prevention and life safety provisions for buildings and premises. The California Building Code regulates the fire, life, and structural safety aspects of all buildings and related structures. None of the codes cover all issues, but together they provide a complete and comprehensive program of regulations that are compatible in terms and requirements.

The 2021 edition of the IFC updates previous editions and incorporates changes approved by the International Code Council. The process that led to the publication of this edition of the IFC involved open public hearings and approvals by code officials representing jurisdictions throughout the country.

The concept of a single set of codes for the nation is grounded in the economic efficiency gained by unified design and building criteria. It is less expensive to create, maintain, design, build to, and enforce a single set of building standards. While uniformity is a worthy concept, it is a goal and not an absolute. No responsible city or state adopts a model code without thoroughly analyzing its geographic, climactic, and topographic characteristics, as well as its public expectation of acceptable risk, demographics, economic conditions, public safety infrastructure, and loss-history.

This year, as in the past, the Fire District has exercised due diligence in the analysis of the CFC and IFC and has found it desirable to propose amendments to meet conditions

encountered in Ventura County. Significant amendments have been retained from Fire District Ordinance No. 31 due to local requirements for such things as fire-flow, fire hazard abatement, and fire protection systems, with minor editorial changes related to location within the code and section numbering. There are some proposed modifications to prior amendments, as well as to the 2022 CFC and 2021 IFC, that were presented for your review at the first reading of the Ordinance.

A preliminary draft of the proposed amendments and findings was also presented to building officials, interested stakeholder groups, and the public, pursuant to H&SC Section 13869.7.

Chapter 5, Section 507, and Appendix B regulate fire protection water supplies. The California State Fire Marshal recently determined fire protection water supplies to be classified as a building standard pursuant to H&SC Section 18909. As such, some amendments included in Chapter 5, Section 507, and Appendix B are more restrictive than the building standards contained within the California Buildings Standards Code. The Fire District has maintained such provisions for fire protection water supplies since January 1991, when Fire District Ordinance No. 19 was adopted.

Chapter 9, Section 903, which regulates automatic fire sprinkler systems, contains amendments to provisions that are defined as building standards pursuant to H&SC 18909. Some amendments included in Chapter 9, Section 903 are more restrictive than the building standards contained within the California Building Standards Code. The Fire District has maintained such building standards containing requirements for automatic fire extinguishing systems since June 3, 1982, when Fire District Ordinance No. 14 was adopted.

The fire protection requirements of proposed Ordinance No. 32 were formulated pursuant to H&SC Section 13869.7, which authorizes the Fire District to adopt building standards relating to fire and public safety that are more stringent than those standards contained in the California Building Standards Code; however, such standards must be ratified by the legislative bodies of member cities and the County before they become effective therein. Therefore, an additional agenda item will be presented after the public hearing on this item, so that the Board of Supervisors for the County of Ventura can ratify Chapter 5 Section 507, Chapter 9, Section 903, and Appendix B of Ordinance No. 32 to allow enforcement within the unincorporated areas of the County.

Existing Fire District Ordinance No. 31 will be preempted and no longer effective once the state's adoption of the new California Building Code becomes effective on January 1, 2023. Without adoption by your Board of Ordinance No. 32 and the subsequent ratification by the County and the Fire District's member cities as described in Recommendation No. 2, the Fire District will lose the ability to enforce certain fire protection building standards that greatly assist in the protection of life and property.

The County Executive Office, the Auditor-Controller's office, and County Counsel have reviewed this letter and proposed ordinance.

If you have any questions regarding this item, please call me at (805) 389-9704 or Fire Marshal Massoud Araghi at (805) 389-9729.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dustin Gardner", followed by a long horizontal line.

Dustin Gardner  
Fire Chief

DG/MA/RK:lgf

Attachments: Fire District Ordinance No. 32