EL DORADO COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

RESOLUTION 2025-XX

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE EL DORADO COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT ADOPTING FINDINGS SUPPORTING AMENDMENTS TO THE CALIFORNIA FIRE CODE

A resolution for the El Dorado County Fire Protection District setting forth findings with respect to local conditions within the Fire District which make certain modifications and changes to the California Fire Code reasonably necessary for preserving fire and life safety in the El Dorado County Fire Protection District.

The Governing Board of the El Dorado County Fire Protection District finds and resolves as follows:

WHEREAS, Health & Safety Code Section 17958.5 permits a Fire Protection District to adopt an ordinance which changes or modifies the State Housing regulations adopted pursuant to Health & Safety Code Section 17922 upon determination that such changes or modifications are necessary due to local conditions that pertain regulations governing conditions hazardous to life, property and the environment from fire, explosion, hazardous materials and hazardous uses; and

WHEREAS, Health & Safety Code Section 17958. 7 requires that a District's Board of Directors making any changes or modifications pursuant to Health & Safety Code Section 17958.5 shall make express finding that such changes or modifications are needed; and shall file a copy of such changes or modifications with the Department of Housing and Community Development.

WHEREAS, the unique local climatic, geological, and topographical conditions existing within the boundaries of the District make it reasonably necessary for the District to impose more stringent requirements than set forth in the California Fire Code and pursuant to California Health and Safety Code sections 13869.7 and 17958.7, the District desires to make express findings to that effect.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the El Dorado County Fire Protection District, after having duly noticed and held public hearings, hereby adopts the following findings concerning current unique local conditions that together make each modification to the California Fire Code, reasonably necessary to provide adequate and effective protection of life, property and the environment more specifically set forth as follows:

FINDINGS OF FACT
FOR CHANGES OR MODIFICATIONS TO THE STATE BUILDING STANDARDS CODE (TITLE 24, PART 9) BECAUSE OF LOCAL CONDITIONS

A. **General.**

After due consideration, the Board of Directors of the El Dorado County Fire Protection District, hereby finds that due to local climatic, geologic and topographic conditions, as stated within this document, there is a need to provide the modifications and changes contained in the adoptive Ordinance of the California Fire Code. Such changes are deemed to be reasonably necessary to provide adequate and effective protection of life, property and the environment.

The El Dorado County Fire Protection District provides fire protection, emergency medical services and specialized rescue services to approximately seventy-four thousand people in a 281 square mile area. The District is located on the western slope of El Dorado County. The topography of the District ranges from rolling hills of grass and oak woodland in the west and oak-timber in the steep drainages of the east portion. The weather conditions vary from freezing temperatures with occasional snow in winter, to summer temperatures that regularly exceed 100 degrees.

The District is divided into five distinct areas: Gold Hill, City of Placerville, Pleasant Valley, Pollock Pines/Strawberry, and Shingle Springs. Most of the commercial and industrial areas are located along the corridor of Highway 50 and more rural communities with home sites on larger parcels along the outer areas of the district

The El Dorado County Fire Protection District is an "all-risk" agency in which the District participates in a sophisticated automatic aid program with other agencies within the county. The resources of the District will respond to, and deal with, any type of emergency. The term "Fire Protection" in this document is broad and includes responses to fires, smoke and odor investigations, alarms, public assist calls, hazardous materials incidents, medical aid, fire investigations and specialized rescues.

The District has five; full-time, staffed fire stations which provide emergency services to the community. Fire Station 17 is located in the unincorporated town of Pollock Pines at 6430 Pony Express Trail. Fire Station 19 is located in the unincorporated area of Placerville known as Pleasant Valley at 4429 Pleasant Valley Road. Fire Station 25 is located in the City of Placerville at 3034 Sacramento Street. Fire Station 28 is located in the unincorporated town of Shingle Springs at 3860 Ponderosa Road. Fire Station 72 is located in the unincorporated town of Cool at 7200 Saint Florian Court. The District has 72 full-time, career personnel, along with three support staff positions.

B. **Climatic.**

The El Dorado County Fire Protection District is a four-season foothill–to–mountain district on the west slope of the Sierra Nevada. West-slope foothill communities (e.g., Placerville) receive about 38 inches of precipitation annually, with roughly 88% falling November–April and only 12% from May–October. Snowfall varies sharply with elevation: lower-elevation neighborhoods see light, episodic snow in most winters, while upper-elevation service areas average ~40–45 inches (Pollock Pines) to ~148 inches (Kyburz). Summers are hot and very dry—afternoon relative humidity frequently ranges ~10–25%, daily highs commonly exceed 90°F, and historic local extremes (e.g., 114°F in Placerville) accelerate fuel drying and increase fire behavior potential. Wind regimes include typical southwesterly summer flow but also dry north/east downslope events that drive rapid fire spread, as well as winter storm winds that routinely reach 40–60 mph. During critical fire-weather periods, utilities may implement Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS), impacting communications, traffic control, and emergency operations.

In the past two decades the District has experienced multi-year droughts (1986–1991, 1998–2003, 2007–2009, 2012–2016, 2020–2022), followed by 2022–23 atmospheric river events that produced well-above-normal precipitation and heavy Sierra snow. These oscillations (prolonged drought punctuated by high-intensity storms) increase both wildfire severity and storm-related impacts. Adverse weather conditions create hazardous road conditions, flooding, rockfall/debris flows, and recurring road closures along primary corridors (including U.S. 50) and local access routes. Such conditions lead to longer response times, simultaneous incident demands (e.g., traffic collisions during storms), and at times limited mutual aid due to regional weather or blocked routes..

Summary:
These climatic conditions—prolonged seasonal dryness, low humidity, high temperatures, elevation-driven snowfall, strong wind events, and storm-related closures—increase the speed, intensity, and size of fires in the District, particularly in the wildland–urban interface. They also degrade response and evacuation reliability during peak hazard periods. Accordingly, they justify the District's more-restrictive local amendments to the 2025 California Fire Code, including enhanced fire apparatus access and all-weather roadway standards, water supply/fire-flow and hydrant requirements, WUI ignition-resistant features and vegetation management, and automatic fire sprinkler and alarm provisions needed to protect life, property, and the environment under local climatic conditions.

C. **Geological.** The El Dorado County Fire Protection District lies on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada within a dissected foothill landscape of steep canyons and narrow ridges. The District spans approximately 281 square miles and serves about 74,000 residents, with elevations ranging from ~1,400 to ~5,300 feet above sea level. The area includes mapped strands of the Rescue Lineament–Bear Mountains fault zone (Foothills fault system) and is subject to moderate regional seismicity. Shaking, co-seismic rockfall/landslide potential, and terrain-driven access constraints increase the likelihood of simultaneous, distributed emergencies during a seismic event (e.g., multiple fires, structural collapses, medical incidents, and roadway blockages).

Critical lifeline systems that support fire suppression are vulnerable to earthquake effects. The public water system relies on multiple pressure zones, electrically driven pumping stations, and elevated/ground-level storage tanks to deliver and maintain fire-flow. Extended power outages and physical damage to tanks, mains, appurtenances, and pump stations can significantly reduce hydrant performance or render portions of the system temporarily inoperable. Under such conditions, the District may need to transport water with mobile apparatus and water tenders, which imposes substantial operational constraints when roadways, bridges, or slopes are compromised. Concurrent electrical failures and natural gas releases increase the risk of post-earthquake fire, while debris and slope instability can delay mutual-aid access into and within the District.

Summary:
Local geologic and topographic conditions—steep terrain, canyon "chimneys," mapped foothill faulting, and reliance on pumped, zone-based water systems—can hamper the District's ability to provide immediate emergency service and amplify fire-following-earthquake risk. These conditions justify the District's more-restrictive local amendments to the 2025 California Fire Code, including (as applicable) enhanced fire apparatus access and roadway reliability standards, strengthened water-supply/fire-flow and hydrant requirements with operational water-supply alternatives, protection and anchorage of fire-protection equipment, emergency power/standby power provisions for critical life-safety systems, and risk-based controls for hazardous materials storage in seismically susceptible areas.

D. **Topographical.** The El Dorado County Fire Protection District encompasses foothill-to-mountain terrain on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada, with elevations ranging from ~1,400 feet to over 6,000 feet. Slopes vary from level to greater than 40%, with extensive canyons and drainages ("chimneys")

that funnel wind and accelerate fire spread. Much of the District is designated by the State as High or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) within the wildland–urban interface (WUI). Vegetation transitions from grass/brush and mixed oak woodland at lower elevations to dense mixed-conifer forest higher up. Prolonged drought, tree mortality (including beetle-affected stands), and variable vegetation management have increased available fuels and ladder-fuel continuity.

Many neighborhoods were built before modern access standards and are characterized by narrow, winding roadways, long driveways, limited secondary egress, steep grades, and weight-restricted or narrow bridges. The District's primary regional corridors—U.S. Highway 50 (east–west) and State Route 49 (north–south)—can experience closures or restrictions due to winter storms, debris flows, rockfall, or major incidents, which in turn delay emergency response and evacuation and can limit mutual-aid ingress. Continued infill and accessory dwelling units (ADUs) reduce building separations, increasing structure-to-structure ignition via radiant and convective heat and ember exposure during WUI fires. Where topography and infrastructure concentrate demand (e.g., canyon subdivisions with single-way-in/out), incident concurrency and access congestion are common. Compounding factors can include damage to water-system infrastructure (mains, tanks, pump stations) and isolation from roadway damage or debris blockages during severe events

Summary:
The District's steep, channelized terrain, continuous fuels, legacy road network, and constrained egress amplify fire spread potential and complicate response and evacuation. These conditions justify the District's more-restrictive local amendments to the 2025 California Fire Code, including: enhanced fire apparatus access (width, grade, turnarounds, bridges, gates, addressing), strengthened water-supply/fire-flow and hydrant requirements (and operational water-supply alternatives where needed), WUI ignition-resistant construction and vegetation management/defensible space provisions, and automatic fire sprinkler and alarm requirements appropriate to topographic and WUI risk.

E. Conclusion:
Local climatic, geological and topographic conditions described above increase the frequency, intensity, and size of fires involving buildings in the Fire District. Further, these conditions impact potential damage to structures from an earthquake and subsequent fire. Therefore, it is reasonably necessary that the California Fire Code be modified to mitigate the effects of the above conditions.
California Health & Safety Code Section 17958.7 requires that modifications to the Fire Code be expressly marked and identified as to which each finding refers to which Code modification. The attached Appendix A provides this connection.

INTRODUCED at a regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the El Dorado County Fire Protection District on September 16th, 2025.

PASSED AND ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the El Dorado County Fire Protection District on September 16th, 2025, by the following roll call vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

ATTEST:

Kathleen Freeman, Board Secretary	Mickey Kaiserman, Board Chair