



"Citrus Capital of the World"

City of Santa Paula

970 Ventura Street • Santa Paula, California • Mailing Address: P.O. Box 569 • 93061 • Phone: (805) 525-4478 • Fax: (805) 525-6278

June 10, 2021

California Fire Safe Council
5834 Price Ave, Ste. 101
McClellan, CA 95652

Dear California Fire Safe Council:

The City of Santa Paula has a population vulnerable to the risks of wildfires for several reasons. As designated in CalEnviroScreen 3.0, the City of Santa Paula is designated as a low-income and disadvantaged community with poverty at the 91st percentile, linguistic isolation at the 95th percentile and a lack of higher educational attainment at the 96th percentile. In a predominantly Spanish speaking community, where poverty is already very high and above the State average, the loss of habitable structures and infrastructure would be catastrophic to our community as the housing burden in the City sits at the 82nd percentile in the State.

The Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council "*Before the Fire*" program would reduce the susceptibility of homes and property to damage and/or loss from wildfires and assist in keeping our community and residents safe. According to the U.S. Forestry, "Wildfire Risk to Communities Index", Santa Paula has an above average risk of 70% compared to other communities in California. "*Before the Fire*" is a bilingual program that will create a standardized HIZ data tracking system, host HIZ workshops, complete HIZ assessments, facilitate chipper days and provide follow-up support. While most similar programs focus on individual home assessments, this will focus on entire neighborhoods within our community.

Due to the urgent need to support wildfire mitigation through greater public awareness and action for all our residents, the City of Santa Paula supports the Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council's (VRFSC) grant application, Home Hardening A to Z, for the California Fire Safe Council's 2021 SFA Prevention Grant.

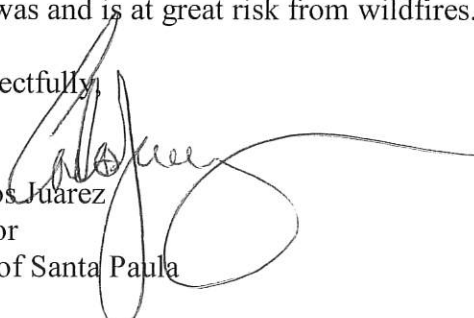
The VRFSC grant application demonstrates that they have a proven track record working with vulnerable multilingual and multicultural populations. The VRFSC, for example, recently trained ten *promotoras* (local, trusted and vetted Spanish-speaking community leaders to make home visits to Spanish speakers) in Piru. After training, the *promotoras* provided small group and one-on-one sessions with mono-lingual agricultural workers to raise awareness about the "Ready, Set, Go!" program, and also to survey them on their knowledge gaps and challenges regarding wildfire preparedness in general. This new program is comprised of a three-way partnership between the Promotoras y Promotores Foundation, Cabrillo Low-Income Housing, Inc. and the VRFSC in order to grow the VRFSC's outreach to Spanish speakers.

As the City of Santa Paula has a great need for this program, we stand by ready to assist with outreach, facilities and support to help VRFSC be successful in our community. We can also help promote their cause through our social media outlets, web site channels and government cable access channel since *"Before the Fire"* is a community service that is free to residents and helps achieve one of our core safety goals in our newly adopted Strategic Plan.

Santa Paula is in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) and has had multiple experiences with wildfires over the last decade. Building wildfire resilience is a huge issue for our community and we want to do everything we can to protect our families, homes, businesses, neighborhoods and communities.

Your approval of the proposed 2021 grant to VRFSC will be of incalculable value to raising awareness and preparedness in a multigenerational, multicultural and multilingual community that was and is at great risk from wildfires.

Respectfully,



Carlos Juárez
Mayor
City of Santa Paula

Cc: City Council
City Manager
Gary Monday, Fire Battalion Chief, Ventura County