



OFFICE OF ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY
WILDFIRE SAFETY ADVISORY BOARD
2024-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN

JUNE 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- MESSAGE FROM WILDFIRE SAFETY ADVISORY BOARD CHAIRPERSON 3
- DEFINING OUR PLAN ELEMENTS 4
- WILDFIRE SAFETY ADVISORY BOARD STRATEGY MAP 5
 - 1.1 Vision 5
 - 1.2 Mission 5
 - 1.3 Strategic Priorities..... 5
- Priority #1 BUILDING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH EXTERNAL PARTNERS..... 6
- Priority #2 ACTUALIZING OUR MISSION IN COLLABORATION WITH ENERGY SAFETY 7
- Priority #3 RETAINING AND DEVELOPING STAFF 8
- Priority #4 CREATING THE STRUCTURES AND PRACTICES FOR SUCCESSFUL
IMPLEMENTATION 9
- BACKGROUND 10
 - 1. Wildfire Safety Advisory Overview 10
 - 2. Governance Structure for Strategic Plan 10
 - 3. Strategic Plan Process Overview 11

MESSAGE FROM WILDFIRE SAFETY ADVISORY BOARD CHAIRPERSON

I am pleased to present the California Wildfire Safety Advisory Board’s (WSAB or Board) 2024-2027 Strategic Plan. The WSAB Board members and staff are an outstanding team and we have worked collaboratively since our inception in 2020. It has been an honor to serve as Board Chair for the past two years. The WSAB was established just a few months before COVID locked the world down. We became part of a new division of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for just 18 months before moving with the division to establish a new agency, the Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety (Energy Safety) under the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA).

Amid great change in the world, was great change for energy policy in California. The WSAB has existed now for four years. We have reviewed wildfire mitigation plans from publicly- and investor-owned utilities, made recommendations for improvements to the guidelines, hosted workshops, participated in field visits, and hosted guest speakers to learn and make recommendations toward state-of-the-art mitigation of utility-caused wildfires. We have helped to shape the technical and policy guidelines that exist in today’s wildfire mitigation plans. Now, Energy Safety is established and growing within CNRA. The WSAB is only just beginning its contributions, and it is time to dig in. We held a strategic planning session in March of 2024 to collaboratively establish a plan for our next three years. It was important to me as Chair to make sure all seven of us were physically present and that all our voices were heard for this plan to be a team effort. I look forward to working with my fellow Board members and Board staff on implementation of this Strategic Plan to advance the Board’s commitment to serve the State of California and to next pursue the steps necessary to create an implementation plan.

I invite all stakeholders to join in working with us to achieve the goals outlined here, and to realize a fire resilient California, free of utility caused wildfires.

Sincerely,



Jessica Block, Chairperson
California Wildfire Safety Advisory Board

DEFINING OUR PLAN ELEMENTS

The Strategic Map is a working document to help guide decisions and priorities for the Board. The governance structure and process will inform the plan.

The Vision describes the desired result of performing our mission. It paints the picture of what we endeavor to achieve because of the work we do. It is the unifying, inspiring picture of the impact of the shared work of Unified Programs.

The Mission describes the fundamental purpose of the Unified Programs. It is what we do every day in service of the State of California.

The Strategic Priorities are the big areas of strategic focus that will allow us to reach our vision and meet the mission of Unified Program. Each goal is described in its definition and has several objectives.

The Objectives are the outcomes that will help us move towards each Strategic Goal.

The Strategies and Tactics are the implementation activities and steps that will result in the objectives being met. These initiatives, strategies, and tactics will be developed in an on-going manner to ensure goals are met. An **Implementation Strategy** paragraph for each strategic goal is included in this plan.

The Key Performance Indicators or Targets are the measures that will mark our progress. The Key Performance Indicators will be established in coordination with the governance structure.

WILDFIRE SAFETY ADVISORY BOARD STRATEGY MAP

1. Vision

A fire resilient California free of utility caused wildfires.

2. Mission

To advise and make recommendations to reduce the risk of utility related wildfires.

3. Strategic Priorities

3.1.1 Priority #1

Building Collaborative Relationships with External Partners

3.1.2 Priority #2

Actualizing our Mission in Collaboration with the Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety (Energy Safety)

3.1.3 Priority #3

Retaining and Developing Staff

3.1.4 Priority #4

Creating the Structures and Practices for Successful Implementation

Priority #1 BUILDING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH EXTERNAL PARTNERS

1. Definition

Assess, access, and dialog with outside influencers that enhance the WSAB’s ability to achieve its mission, “to advise and make recommendations to reduce the risk of utility related wildfires”.

2. Objectives

- Establish meaningful, mutually beneficial, and consistent practices for communicating with key partners.
- Develop clear priorities for mission related collaborative efforts.
- Create communication practices and calendar interaction activities to support relationship development and collaboration.

3. Implementation Strategy

The WSAB has subject matter expertise in Wildfire Safety and the successful implementation of the WSAB mission “to advise and make recommendations to reduce the risk of utility related wildfires” requires building positive relationships with key external partners. To build stronger relationships the first step is to increase and improve communication to diverse stakeholders. This will include evaluation of needs and current practices to inform new practices. The plan will focus on ensuring consistent communication as it relates to regulatory changes and other relevant updates.

4. Key Performance Indicators/Targets

Below are some possible measurements of success that may be modified based on additional input and strategies implemented.

- Ensure affected stakeholders are aware of proposed legislation, recommendations, and advisory opinions through recognized preferred channels and that comments are openly considered.
- Board members meet with three partner organizations per quarter.
- Perform a minimum of one Site Visit per year.

Priority #2 ACTUALIZING OUR MISSION IN COLLABORATION WITH ENERGY SAFETY

1. Definition

Productive and proactive engagement with Energy Safety to meaningfully contribute to the WSAB's expertise for the benefit of Energy Safety.

2. Objectives

- Develop in-person engagement with Energy Safety.
- Increased participation in administrative decision processes such as budget and staffing.
- Discover Energy Safety's needs and wants for setting WSAB priorities.
- Share WSAB priorities and expertise with Energy Safety.

3. Implementation Strategy

The WSAB serves within the Energy Safety structure. It is therefore critically important that the WSAB and Energy Safety are coordinated in working collaboratively to actualize the Mission. The implementation strategy for this critical strategic goal is to understand the needs of Energy Safety more clearly as they relate to the WSAB. Additionally, the WSAB is committed to increasing their administrative capacity and responsibility.

4. Key Performance Indicators/Targets

Below are some possible measurements of success that may be modified based on additional input and strategies implemented.

- Setting clear expectations of WSAB and Energy Safety responsibilities.
 - Energy Safety requests for special advisory opinions
 - Participating in emerging collaborations
- Regular meetings with WSAB chair/vice chair and Energy Safety leadership. Keeping each other informed of activities and evolving topic interests.
- The WSAB has set Annual Budget discussions and participates in the budgeting process as appropriate.

Priority #3 RETAINING AND DEVELOPING STAFF

1. Definition

Creating a positive environment and employment practices that allow for the effective recruitment, retention, and development of WSAB staff.

2. Objectives

- Develop improved employee retention practices.
- Create opportunities for career development for WSAB staff.
- Create work practices that support staff members' work success and allow for work/life balance.

3. Implementation Strategy

The implementation of this strategic goal requires building employment practices that offer clarity of roles and responsibilities, improved employee retention practices, and opportunities for career development within the WSAB. Additionally, it is critical that work practices support a healthy workplace with work/life balance.

4. Key Performance Indicators/Targets

Below are some possible measurements of success that may be modified based on additional input and strategies implemented.

- Set a benchmark for employee satisfaction levels.
- Define opportunities for staff to engage in topics of interest and contribute their expertise.
- Each employee has clear roles and responsibilities.
- Each employee has an annual individual development plan developed with the supervisor to improve relevant skills and knowledge.

Priority #4 CREATING THE STRUCTURES AND PRACTICES FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

1. Definition

Develop and refine processes, structures, and practices to ensure successful implementation of work.

2. Objectives

WASB has established and consistently applies effective project management practices. Table 1. Key roles critical to supporting effective governance.

- Plan and facilitate open meetings to allow for appropriate strategic collaboration.
- Establish cohesive vision and roles and responsibilities.
- Ensure current activities are sufficiently resourced.
- Create sufficient cadence of communication between Board and staff.

3. Implementation Strategy

The implementation plan for Creating the Structures and Practices for success include developing unified practices for consistent accountability, developing templates, and establishing processes. Additionally, effective project management practices will support greater effectiveness and efficient utilization of resources.

4. Key Performance Indicators/Targets

Below are some possible measurements of success that may be modified based on additional input and strategies implemented.

- Maintain an updated staff guide as a living document.
- Initiate a project management system by December 2024.
- Every initiative has clear deadlines, assigned team members, and measurements.

BACKGROUND

The following sections identify the WSAB's statutory mandates, the governance structure for implementation of the strategic plan, and a strategic plan overview.

1. Wildfire Safety Advisory Overview

The WSAB was established following the catastrophic fires of 2017 and 2018 in California. Public Utilities Code (P.U.C.) §8386 sub-sections(b) through (d) established requirements that electrical corporations file Wildfire Mitigation Plans (WMPs) on an annual basis with Energy Safety beginning in 2020. P.U.C. §326.2 established the WSAB, a seven-member body of wildfire and utility policy experts appointed by the Governor, Speaker of the Assembly, and Senate Committee on Rules. These statutes further established Energy Safety as a department under the CNRA. The legislation mandates that the WSAB develop and make recommendations to Energy Safety related to the electrical corporations' WMPs and safety culture assessments. Under P.U.C. §326.2, the WSAB provides independent analysis and expert guidance to Energy Safety on wildfire safety issues. Each WSAB member brings dedication and a unique perspective to support California's efforts in mitigating wildfire.

The WSAB is statutorily required to perform delineated functions, as well as:

- Meet at least quarterly and alternate meeting locations between northern, central, and southern California.
- Consult annually with Energy Safety in preparation of its annual budget.
- Receive a per diem for attendance at board meetings, and reimbursement for all reasonable costs including staffing, travel, and administrative costs.

2. Governance Structure for Strategic Plan

A governance structure is critical to strategic implementation. Active strategic plan governance fosters a culture of integrity by supporting implementation through both flexibility and accountability. An effective governance structure creates accountability through frequent, consistent reporting. The governance structure must also support flexibility necessary for strategic success in a dynamic and changing environment while maintaining the strategic focus and plan integrity. Finally, the governance structure provides a forum for shared problem solving, resources allocation, and prioritization support.

The WSAB leads the policy oversight and implementation of the workplan through development and execution of a strategic plan and ensuring an orderly application of resources to maximize compliance with regulatory program standards. There are a few key roles that are critical to supporting effective governance. The following highlights the key roles:

Table 1. Key roles to supporting effective governance.

WSAB Role	Responsibility
Chairperson	Ensure the Strategic Plan Governance is consistently on each agenda.
Program and Project Supervisor	Manage implementation of plan through resource allocation and reporting to the WSAB.
Strategic Priority Stewards	Advocate for and ensure progress for assigned strategic priority.

At quarterly WSAB Board meetings, the staff will report on goal progress, identify any challenges, and recommend strategic or tactical changes to their implementation plans. The WSAB will provide direction and guidance in support of each goal team. The WSAB will guide decisions on some of the following:

- Performance measures
- Resource allocation
- Prioritization
- Implementation decisions

3. Strategic Plan Process Overview

The WSAB has successfully met initial requirements and recognizes the importance of strategic planning to set future direction and priorities. To support this effort, the Board contracted for a consultant to facilitate a full day’s strategic planning session.

The planning process was initiated and completed with collaboration and shared decision making as the cornerstone of every step in the process.

The following highlights some of the key activities completed during the collaborative in-person strategic planning session.

- A historical review of the WSAB and impacting wildfire related events, capturing lessons learned, performing a SWOT¹ analysis and uncovering underlying challenges to the vision,
- Vision and Mission refinement,

¹ SWOT refers to strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and is part of a framework for evaluating the position of an organization and strategic planning.

- Strategic Priority identification and the development of corresponding objectives with possible tactics and strategies.

The next step for the Board is to:

- Develop an implementation plan,
- Assign responsibilities for action items, and
- Identify and/or validate key performance metrics/measurements for each strategic priority.

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