

  
CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

## OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_ C.M.S.

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMEMBER RAMACHANDRAN

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**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF CALIFORNIA SENATE BILL 959 (GRAYSON) WHICH WOULD (1) EMPOWER LOCAL FIRE OFFICIALS TO DETERMINE WHETHER CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS SHOULD CANCEL CLASSES DUE TO THE THREAT OF WILDFIRES, (2) ENSURE THAT SCHOOLS WOULD NOT LOSE AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE FUNDING FOR PREEMPTIVELY CANCELING CLASSES WHEN FACING WILDFIRE DANGER, AND (3) KEEP STUDENTS AND RESIDENTS IN OAKLAND AND NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES SAFE AS THE FREQUENCY AND SEVERITY OF WILDFIRES CONTINUES TO INCREASE STATEWIDE**

**WHEREAS**, California has experienced an unprecedented rise in the frequency and severity of wildfires as the state faces the new reality of a year-round fire season; and

**WHEREAS**, recent historic wildfires throughout California and the Western United States demonstrates that the impacts of global climate change will continue to have potentially devastating local effects throughout the region, including habitat destruction, loss of life, economic impacts, infrastructural damage, and public health hazards associated with air quality; and

**WHEREAS**, recent tragedies like the Eaton and Palisades Fires in Southern California along with the Dixie and LNU Lightning Complex Fires in Northern California have led to action on several fronts to apply lessons learned from these tragic events; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Oakland has a history of devastating wildfires, including the 1991 Oakland Hills fire that cost the lives of 25 people, injured 150 residents, destroyed 3,469 homes and apartments, and cost \$3.9 billion in present-day dollars; and

**WHEREAS**, approximately a third of properties in Oakland and their residents have some risk of being impacted by wildfires over the next 30 years – with the Oakland Hills remaining at continued risk of future wildfires due to increasingly hot and dry weather; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Oakland has thousands of residents living within its Wildfire Prevention Zone – many of whom are students attending public and private schools located within this Zone; and

**WHEREAS**, while state Education Code currently lists fire as one the emergencies where a school may cancel classes without risking Average Daily Attendance funding, a lack of clarity in state law fails to specify whether schools could lose funding by preemptively closing due to possible fire risk; and

**WHEREAS**, local fire agencies have the experience and expertise to make advance determinations as to whether a school is at imminent risk of wildfire danger but do not currently have the authority to make said determinations; and

**WHEREAS**, preemptively closing schools located in residential neighborhoods that are facing an impending wildfire would enhance community safety by both allowing students, teachers, school personnel, and residents to evacuate more quickly and firefighters to safely enter areas with limited ingress and egress; and

**WHEREAS**, California Senate Bill (SB) 959, introduced by Senator Tim Grayson, would address the gap in current law by empowering local fire agencies to make advance determinations on whether a school should close due to wildfire danger; and

**WHEREAS**, SB 959 would additionally ensure that schools would not lose Average Daily Attendance funding if proactive action is taken to close a school facing the threat of a potential wildfire; and

**WHEREAS**, by implementing these changes to state law pertaining to wildfire safety, SB 959 will help Oakland and its neighboring municipalities more effectively prepare for and respond to the increasing threat of wildfires in the interest of community safety; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED:** That the City of Oakland supports SB 959 (Grayson) in the California State Legislature; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the City Council directs the City Administrator to immediately distribute this Resolution upon its adoption to Governor Gavin Newsom and State Senator Tim Grayson

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA,

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES - BROWN, FIFE, GALLO, HOUSTON, RAMACHANDRAN, UNGER, WANG, AND  
PRESIDENT JENKINS

NOES –

ABSENT –

ABSTENTION –

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_

ASHA REED  
City Clerk and Clerk of the Council of the  
City of Oakland, California