RECOMMENDED ACTION: At the request of Councilmember Wagner, 1) Authorize the Mayor to send a letter to Governor Newsom requesting that he initiate legislation to: a) require mandatory inspections by National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) and compliance with NFPA guidelines that combine proper landscaping and structure hardening to prevent ember ignition; and b) require utility companies to place above ground equipment underground, starting with areas most susceptible to fires; and 2) Direct the City’s lobbyist to work with State legislators and agencies to initiate this legislation.

FISCAL IMPACT: There is no fiscal impact associated with the recommended action.

WORK PLAN: This item was not included in the Adopted Work Plan for Fiscal Year 2019-2020. This project is part of normal staff operations.

DISCUSSION: The City just recognized the one-year anniversary of the Woolsey Fire, the most devastating event in the its history and the most damaging fire ever in Los Angeles County. According to CAL FIRE, in the month of October 2019, there were 158 wildfires throughout the state consuming over 122,400 acres. Included in that list were the Saddle Ridge, Wendy, Palisades, Tick, Getty, Easy and Maria Fires, which broke out in some of Malibu’s neighboring communities. At the same time, most of the state experienced some of the most extreme wind conditions in recent memory, which provided the serious potential to inflict further damage if any of those local fires had been swept by the winds into Malibu. It has already been determined that power lines provided the ignition for several of these fires, in addition to many of the most disastrous fires in California over the past two to three years.
Councilmember Wagner is recommending that the City support statewide regulations to reduce some of the potential for wildfire destruction. He requests the Council authorize the Mayor to send a letter to Governor Newsom to request that he initiate legislation requiring homeowners in high fire areas to get an NFPA inspection and comply with the advice provided. Additionally, it could be recommended that the State Insurance Commission encourage private insurance companies to offer discounts to customers who pass the NFPA inspections.

Councilmember Wagner also requests that the letter to Governor Newsom include the recommendation that legislation be initiated requiring utility companies to begin placing above ground equipment underground, beginning with those areas most susceptible to fire.

ATTACHMENTS: None.