

**2019 WILDFIRE BENEFIT ASSESSMENT ZONE  
STATUS UPDATE FOR BHA MEMBERS NOV-2024**

**Background**

- In 2019, property owners in the four west-side HOAs (Buckingham, Riviera Heights, Riviera West, Clear Lake Riviera) were assessed ~\$100 each by county vote to be spent on wildfire mitigation and compliance projects that could not be done or enforced by the HOAs.
  - Part of the reason this assessment was desired is that the three Riviera HOAs do not have the right to clear properties, so the Riviera HOAs turn over violators to the county for clearing. And the assessment was to provide funding for that.
- Unfortunately, the program has languished due to lack of staffing and execution plan in the original assessment.
  - The county must follow county procedures and legal requirements for inspecting and clearing property, more complex and time-consuming than HOAs doing it themselves.
  - Using existing staff across several departments has not been sufficient and is not sustainable, staff are needed for their primary jobs in those departments. So it has been slow and low priority.
- From 2019 to Oct 2024, of the \$482K collected from the HOA property owners, \$187K (~39%) has been spent on clearing properties. Total remaining balance across all HOAs is \$306K.
- Benefits are apportioned based on HOA contribution. From 2019 to Oct 2024, of the \$78K collected from Buckingham property owners, about \$10K was spent. Remaining balance for Buckingham projects is \$68K.
- Current county legal interpretation is that the assessment does not legally allow the county to recover clearance fees from property owners, so once the funds are spent they are gone. CCD considers this a “pilot program” to evaluate how a more long-term, self-sustaining program would be run.

**Lake County Community Development Department (CDD) Proposal to-re-start the program**

(presented to the Lake County Board of Supervisors on Oct. 22, 2024)

<https://countyoflake.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6898328&GUID=B84ED051-8AE3-4BF0-99D3-CECEBDB4929B&Options=&Search=>

- Accelerate the program by hiring one full-time code enforcement officer for weed abatement to plan, manage and oversee the projects and expend all assessment funds in 2025-2026. Cost would be about \$80K per year for this staff position, or \$160K over 2025-2026.
- HOAs response during public comment at the meeting: This staffing position would consume about ½ of the remaining funds (\$160K out of \$306K). This is unacceptably high overhead.

**Outcome of proposal/Current status**

(Lake County Board of Supervisors Oct. 22, 2024)

The Board of Supervisors postponed consideration of the proposal, due to concerns about the legal interpretation of not being able to recoup clearing costs from property owners (preventing the program from being self-sustaining), and concerns about the proposed staff position cost. Supervisors asked the legal counsel to review the cost recovery aspect, and for CCD to come up with alternatives. They are also asking for the HOA leaders to provide proposals to CCD for the remainder of the program.

**Buckingham perspective**

Since Buckingham CCRs allow BHA to enter and clear member properties and charge them for it if they are out of compliance, BHA is less dependent on this BAZ program for weed abatement enforcement against members. However, there are a few properties abutting the BHA that usually need clearing (such along Little Borax Rd and along Soda Bay Rd) that are outside BHA jurisdiction. So BHA needs the county to enforce and keep those properties clear and use the benefit zone assessment funds to do that.