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Megafire Action, FireWERX Celebrate Gov. Newsom Signing SB 1079, The Fire Innovation Unit Act, Into Law

The Fire Innovation Unit Act Heralds A New Era Of Rapid Innovation Across Every Phase Of Wildfire—From Mitigation and Modeling, to Detection and Suppression

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Today, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed SB 1079, the Fire Innovation Unit Act, into law, creating a dedicated unit within CAL FIRE to test and deploy promising new wildfire technologies. Co-sponsored by Megafire Action and FireWERX, SB 1079 is part of the Joint Megafire Prevention Package, the most comprehensive state-level legislative package aimed at mitigating destructive megafires in U.S. history. As Gov. Newsom noted, "The goal has always been bigger than responding to the next fire; it's about leaving California safer, stronger, and better prepared for the generations that follow."

SB 1079, authored by Sen. Henry Stern, builds on Governor Newsom's leadership in providing cutting-edge technologies to frontline personnel by codifying a new Fire Innovation Unit (FIU) to give California a formal mechanism to identify firefighter needs, source technologies, prototype solutions, and move successful technologies from pilot to scale across three programs.

"California has no shortage of groundbreaking technology that can help protect people from catastrophic wildfires, but we haven't had a good enough way to test new tools in the field and move the ones that work toward broader deployment," said **Sen. Henry Stern, author of SB 1079.** "The Fire Innovation Unit gives CAL FIRE a permanent, nimble way to connect innovators with frontline firefighters, test promising technologies before making major procurements, and get proven solutions into the hands of the people protecting our communities. With SB 1079, we're building a bridge from innovation to implementation and giving California a stronger foundation to confront the megafire threat."

"California is already home to some of the most groundbreaking wildfire technology in the world," said **Eric Horne, California Director at Megafire Action.** "Now, thanks to Senator Stern's leadership and Governor Newsom signing SB 1079, we have a permanent pathway to put those innovations to work. This law will help promising technologies get into the field faster, provide firefighters with better tools to do their jobs, and send a clear signal that California is serious about investing in the next generation of wildfire solutions. We're incredibly proud to have co-sponsored SB 1079 and to see this forward-looking approach become law. As the Governor's signing message notes, flexible procurement is essential to moving promising wildfire technologies from pilot to scale and we look forward to continuing working with CAL FIRE, the Department of General Services, and the Department of Technology to align expedited contracting authorities and ensure the Fire Innovation Unit can rapidly deploy technologies that improve community risk reduction and landscape resilience."

“For too long, fire agencies have lacked the structure needed to systematically identify operational needs, evaluate emerging technologies, and move promising solutions from pilot to scale to address the wildfire crisis,” said **Chris Anthony, Founder and CEO, FireWERX.** “SB 1079 changes that by giving CAL FIRE the foundation to build a durable Fire Innovation Unit centered on the needs of its firefighters. The opportunity now is to connect end-user-defined needs with the most promising solutions and create pathways for those solutions to reach the frontlines. FireWERX exists to support CAL FIRE and other Fire Innovation Units in accelerating promising solutions, while keeping the fire service- and the firefighters who best understand their innovation needs- firmly in the lead.”

Megafire Action co-sponsored the bill in close partnership with FireWERX and it was also supported by California Fire Safe Council, California Forward, California Special Districts Association, Pacific Forest Trust, Orange County Fire Authority, The Tahoe Fund, and many other groups.

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About Megafire Action
Megafire Action is the leading non-profit organization dedicated to developing and securing policy solutions to solve the megafire crisis. We advocate for systemic change at the national and state level, with a focus on landscape management, community resilience, and better use of innovative technology solutions.

About FireWERX
FireWERX is a global nonprofit dedicated to accelerating innovation and empowering the Firefighter to end the wildfire crisis. FireWERX supports Fire Innovation Units and connects them to the broader Wildfire Innovation Ecosystem of technologists, funders, researchers, academics, and policy experts — accelerating promising solutions that meet agency-defined needs through structured Pilot-to-Scale Pathways to adoption.