



# NEWS



## News Headlines 08/03/2022

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# Congressman Aguilar visits Fontana to promote bill designed to help fight wildfires and protect water supplies

By Russel Ingold, FONTANAHERALDNEWS.COM

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Rep. Pete Aguilar speaks at a press conference at Fire Station 79 in Fontana.

Rep. Pete Aguilar (D-31st District) visited Fontana on Aug. 2 to express his support for legislation that he said will help local firefighters as they face the constant threat of wildfires.

Aguilar, joined by **San Bernardino County Fire** Chief Dan Munsey, spoke at a press conference at Fire Station 79 in the northwestern corner of the city.

Afterward, they took a tour of the nearby area in Lytle Creek which was impacted by the South Fire, which resulted in evacuations and lost homes last year. Fontana Mayor Acquanetta Warren and City Councilmember Jesse Sandoval, along with several firefighters, attended the event.

“Fires don’t know boundaries between our local cities, our county, and our federal and state lands. We need to make sure we are giving all the resources we can to our local agencies to help mitigate and protect lives and property. That’s exactly what they do right here at Station 79, and I’m appreciative of their efforts,” Aguilar said.

Munsey said the support of the state and federal governments is vital because the county has been ravaged by dozens of major wildfires during his 27 years with the department.

Aguilar voted in favor of the Wildfire Response and Drought Resiliency Act (H.R. 5118), which passed the House of Representatives and was sent to the Senate for consideration.

Aguilar said H.R. 5118 is a comprehensive package of bills that takes necessary action to protect communities from wildfires and protect water supplies. The bill boosts pay and benefits for federal firefighters, establishes a 10-year plan for wildfire management, advances modern water management technology and data and invests in drought-proof water supply projects.

“Wildfires have become a year-round threat, particularly in our communities, burning larger areas of land with greater intensity,” Aguilar said in a statement. “Wildfires are only expected to get worse because of extreme drought conditions. Passing this bill ensures that the Inland Empire and other areas affected by severe wildfires are equipped with the resources they need to preemptively address wildfire risk and shore up our nation’s depleted water supplies. We cannot wait any longer to act on climate change, the health of our planet depends on it.”

In 2021 alone, the effects of both drought and wildfires have cost the United States roughly \$20 billion. More than 2.5 million acres of land in California were burned because of wildfires last year.

Earlier this year, Aguilar voted for the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which included \$84 million to California over the next five years to create a wildfire management plan.

[https://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/news/congressman-aguilar-visits-fontana-to-promote-bill-designed-to-help-fight-wildfires-and-protect-water/article\\_2ef3a6a6-12d5-11ed-8961-4fa0544e9228.html](https://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/news/congressman-aguilar-visits-fontana-to-promote-bill-designed-to-help-fight-wildfires-and-protect-water/article_2ef3a6a6-12d5-11ed-8961-4fa0544e9228.html)

# Local leaders tout wildfire mitigation bills headed to U.S. Senate

By Quinn Wilson, SBSUN.COM

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**San Bernardino County Fire** Department Chief Dan Munsey, left, and Rep. Pete Aguilar, D-San Bernardino, tour an area destroyed by the South Fire near Lytle Creek on Tuesday, Aug. 2, 2022. (Photo by Watchara Phomicinda, The Press-Enterprise/SCNG)

As the charred remains of homes along Lytle Creek Road engulfed in the 2021 South fire serve as a reminder of the constant wildfire danger looming for many Southern Californians, local leaders toured the damage and touted a package of bills Tuesday, Aug. 2, that will be going before the U.S. Senate aimed to bring more aid to wildfire mitigation efforts.

U.S. Representative Pete Aguilar, whose district represents much of the Inland Empire, and San Bernardino County Fire Chief Dan Munsey spoke at the Fire Department's Fire Station 79 in northern Fontana on Tuesday afternoon. Afterwards, the two led a tour through what remained of properties impacted by the South fire in August 2021, which grew to 819 acres in size and destroyed at least nine homes and at least eight outbuildings, according to the Fire Department. One firefighter was also injured in the blaze.

The two discussed the Wildfire Response and Drought Resiliency Act, a package of 49 bills introduced by the U.S. House Committee of Natural Resources, which passed a vote in the U.S. House of Representatives on Friday.

Within the package, wildfire prevention related bills include establishing a new minimum wage of about \$20 an hour for wildland firefighters, developing a 10-year national wildfire response plan and providing tools and resources for communities such as prescribed fires and supporting opportunities for Tribes and Conservation Corps in wildfire activities, according to the House Committee of Natural Resources.

Aguilar voted in favor of the package of bills on Friday.

"This (legislature) will ensure that these extreme weather events that are becoming more and more prevalent throughout our county and thorough out world that we are protected from them," Aguilar said Tuesday.

The South fire also took place in the footprint of the destructive 2003 Grand Prix fire that burned more than 59,400 acres, killed one person and destroyed 135 homes, according to fire officials.

"These fires know no boundaries, they don't know local city limits, federal property or county land," Aguilar said. "These fires will tear through all of these communities irrespective of the jurisdictions."

In regards to drought mitigation, the bills featured with the Wildfire Response and Drought Resiliency Act included provisions such as providing \$500 million to prevent key reservoirs of the Colorado River from declining to critically low conditions and investing in new "drought-proof" supply projects, according to the committee.

The bills also aim to improve wildfire-related programs at the federal level, establish the National Disaster Safety Board and directs the President to establish a National Wildland Fire Risk Reduction Program as well as advancing environmental justice in communities disproportionately harmed by environmental discrimination, according to the committee.

“We cannot wait any longer to act on climate change, the health of our planet depends on it,” Aguilar said in a news release on Monday, Aug. 1.

<https://www.vvdailynews.com/story/news/2022/07/31/local-firefighters-added-memorial-wall-sacramento/10187599002/>

## Fire that claimed 2 lives in San Bernardino deemed accidental

By Quinn Wilson, SBSUN.COM

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A house fire in San Bernardino that claimed two lives over the weekend was determined to be accidental in nature and investigators discovered that the home's occupants did not have any working fire alarms, the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department said Tuesday, Aug. 2.

The fire was reported Saturday, July 30, at 11:11 p.m. in the 1100 block of East Holly Vista Boulevard and it was revealed that the home was possibly occupied, prompting a request for ambulances, the Fire Department said.

Just 40 minutes before the fire was reported, firefighters had responded to a report of a smell of smoke at an intersection north of the fire, fire officials said. After checking the location and the surrounding area and finding no smoke or fire, crews departed, authorities said. It was unclear if the smoke call and the structure fire were related, the Fire Department said.

The firefighters arrived around 11:17 p.m. and found smoke coming from the single-story home, officials said.

Inside the house, the smoke gave zero visibility to the firefighters and they had to utilize a "systematic method" and thermal imaging cameras to help with the rescue, the Fire Department said. A few minutes later, they found the two victims and took them out of the house to medical crews in the front yard of the home, authorities said.

The fire was knocked down a little after 11:30 p.m., officials said.

A search of the area revealed that multiple pets had died in the blaze, including dogs, cats and birds, the Fire Department said. No working smoke alarms were found inside the home either, fire officials said.

The fire's cause was preliminarily determined to be unintentional and accidental in nature, officials said.

"It is important for residents to install and maintain smoke detectors and have a home escape plan," the Fire Department said in a news release.

Identifying information for the victims was not immediately available.

<https://www.sbsun.com/2022/08/02/fire-that-claimed-2-lives-in-san-bernardino-deemed-accidental-no-working-smoke-detectors-found-in-home/>

# Authorities investigate house fire which caused two deaths in San Bernardino

By Staff Writer, FONTANAHERALDNEWS.COM

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The **San Bernardino County Fire** Department

Authorities are continuing to investigate the cause of a house fire which caused the deaths of two people in San Bernardino on July 30.

The fire erupted at 11:11 p.m. in the 1100 block of East Holly Vista Boulevard. Firefighters arrived within six minutes of dispatch to find moderate smoke showing from a single story, single family residence, according to the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department.

After forcing entry through the front door, firefighters entered the home to search for potential victims. Under near zero visibility conditions with smoke levels to the floor, personnel initiated a search, utilizing a systematic method and a thermal imaging camera to help their efforts.

Within minutes they located the two victims, took them from the home and transferred care to awaiting crews outside. However, after the victims were transported to area hospitals in grave condition, they both succumbed to their injuries.

The fire was knocked down within 15 minutes of arrival. A completed search of the home also revealed multiple deceased pets, dogs, cats and birds.

Investigators have preliminarily determined the cause to be accidental and unintentional in nature. The investigation is in its preliminary stages and is currently ongoing. No working smoke detectors were found inside the home at the time of the incident.

"Forty minutes prior to the fire, firefighters responded to a single report of a smell of smoke at an intersection north of the fire. Firefighters checked the dispatched location and surrounding area, finding no smoke or fire. It is unclear if the smoke call and the structure fire are related," said Battalion Chief Mike McClintock.

[https://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/news/inland\\_empire\\_news/authorities-investigate-house-fire-which-caused-two-deaths-in-san-bernardino/article\\_f5aac5a-128e-11ed-9efa-bf9e2a2824ec.html](https://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/news/inland_empire_news/authorities-investigate-house-fire-which-caused-two-deaths-in-san-bernardino/article_f5aac5a-128e-11ed-9efa-bf9e2a2824ec.html)