



From: Jan Leshner 
County Administrator

- **Southeast Zone Board (SZB):** This is a collaborative, interagency group consisting of local, state, and federal land management and fire suppression agencies operating in Southeast Arizona. They provide unified recommendations for fire restrictions across various jurisdictions but hold no regulatory authority. The SZB considers the geographic area of Pima County and portions of abutting areas. (As referenced as Attachment 1)

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The Honorable Chair and Members, Pima County Board of Supervisors

Re: **Additional Information for the Board of Supervisors Meeting on August 5, 2025 – Agenda Item Nos. 11 and 29, Rescinding Stage II Fire Restrictions and Declaration of Fire Emergency**

August 6, 2025

Page 2

- **Membership:** The SZB comprises Fire Management Officers from different land management agencies. (As referenced as Attachment 2)
- **Geographic Consideration:** The SZB's recommendations cover all of Pima County and parts of adjacent areas, considering local, statewide, and national conditions.
- **Fire Insurance:** It is uncertain whether fire restrictions influence homeowner insurance underwriting or premiums.
- **Fire Restrictions:** These are categorized into three stages, with Stage 1 being the least restrictive. The implementation aims to reduce wildfire risks by altering human behavior.
- **Authority for Fire Restrictions:** Pima County Board of Supervisors can adopt ordinances prohibiting open fires and campfires in unincorporated areas during emergencies. The Arizona State Forester and the Department of Agriculture also have authority over fire restrictions.

JKL/dym

Attachment

c: Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator
Steve Holmes, Deputy County Administrator
Sandra Espinoza, Director, Office of Emergency Management

MEMORANDUM

Date: August 5, 2025

To: Ms. Jan Leshar
County Administrator

From: Sandra Espinoza
Director



Re: **Follow-up to August 5, 2025, Board of Supervisors Meeting – Southeast Zone Board**

At the August 5, 2025, Board of Supervisors (BOS) meeting, a request was made to provide additional details for the Southeast Zone Board.

For context, the questions were raised during consideration of items 11 and 29, *Rescinding Stage II Fire Restrictions and Declaration of Fire Emergency*, which were adopted on May 20, 2025, via Resolution No. 2025-16 and 2025-FC3.

What is the Southeast Zone Board?

The Southeast Zone Interagency Fire Board is not a formal federal or state board established by statute. Rather, it is a collaborative, interagency group consisting of local, state and federal land management and fire suppression agencies operating in Southeast Arizona. One of their roles is to provide unified recommendations for fire restrictions across jurisdictions, including the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management (DFFM). While the Southeast Zone Board functions to coordinate consistent public messaging and operational alignment during fire season they hold no regulatory authority.

Who are the members of the Southeast Zone Board?

Membership is comprised of the Fire Management Officers representing each of the land management agencies noted above. Current representatives attached.

Does the Southeast Zone Board recommendation consider Pima County or AZ?

The Southeast Zone Board considers the geographic area (attached) which encompasses all of Pima County and portions of abutting areas. Their recommendation considers local, Statewide and National conditions.

Ms. Jan Leshar, County Administrator

Re: **Follow-up to August 5, 2025, Board of Supervisors Meeting – Southeast Zone Board**

August 5, 2025

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How do recommendations come to the County?

The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) maintains great working relationships with federal land managers and DFFM. Recommendations were provided to OEM from Coronado National Forest Fire Chief and Fire Management Officer respectively.

Do we lose any protection around fire insurance?

It is difficult to provide certainty whether the occurrence of fire restrictions influences homeowner insurance underwriting or policy premiums. It is my understanding DCA DeBonis the designated representative to the Arizona Department of Insurance and actively engaged in the issue of fire insurance.

What do we lose by removing Stage II restrictions or gain by keeping Stage II restrictions?

Across the Nation, Fire Authorities in the wildland fire profession have standardized and categorized Fire Restrictions into 3 Stages. Fire restrictions are intended to alter human behavior to reduce wildfire risks when criteria established warrants. Stage 1 is the least restrictive, and as conditions worsen restrictions are elevated to the most restrictive in phases to Stage 3.

The implementation of fire restrictions is focused mainly on affecting human-related activities recognized as a major cause of wildfires. With fire restrictions in place, we decrease our wildfire risk. With the absence of fire restrictions, we continue our efforts to encourage responsible interaction in recreational and natural areas safely by working with a variety of stakeholders to enhance fire safety education.

Can County Fire restrictions exceed the State's?

The statutory authority for fire restrictions in Arizona primarily derives from A.R.S. § [11-251\(63\)](#), which permits county boards of supervisors to "Adopt and provide for the enforcement of ordinances prohibiting open fires and campfires on designated lands in the unincorporated areas of the county when a determination of emergency is issued by the county emergency management officer and the board deems it necessary to protect public health and safety on those lands."

Additionally, under A.R.S. § [37-1303](#) and [37-1305](#), the Arizona State Forester is authorized to coordinate wildfire suppression and prevention efforts and may impose fire restrictions on state-managed lands. These actions often align with regional interagency fire management groups to maintain consistency across jurisdictions (Southeast Zone Board).

Ms. Jan Leshar, County Administrator

Re: **Follow-up to August 5, 2025, Board of Supervisors Meeting – Southeast Zone Board**

August 5, 2025

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Finally, under [16 U.S.C. § 551](#) and [36 C.F.R. § 261.50](#) (a) and (b) the Department of Agriculture derive their authority to protect public health and safety, as well as National Forest System lands, resources, and facilities.

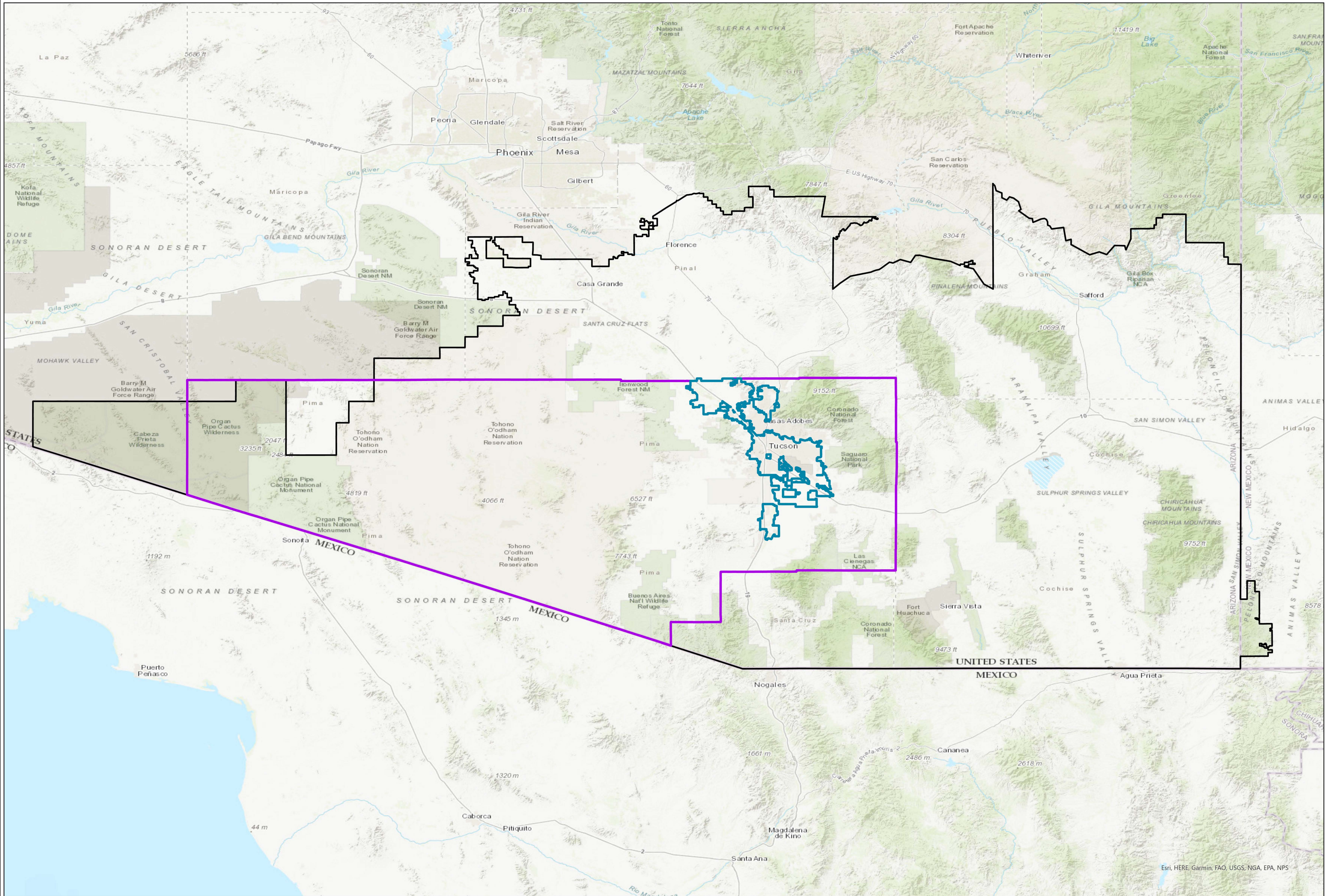
Please let me know if additional information or discussion is needed.


SE/jk

Attachment

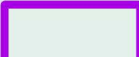
c: Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator
Steve Holmes, Deputy County Administrator
Joey Kosiorowski, Deputy Director, Office of Emergency Management
Amaris Vasquez, Senior Advisor, County Administrator's Office

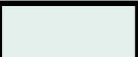
ATTACHMENT #1






AZTDC Boundary

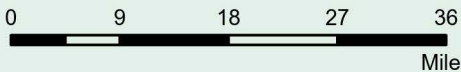
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**Southeast Zone Boundary**

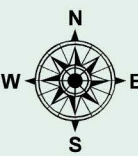
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August 2025

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Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, USGS, NGA, EPA, NPS

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Per A.R.S. 37-178: A public agency that shares geospatial data of which it is the custodian is not liable for errors, inaccuracies or omissions and shall be held harmless from any and against all damage, loss or liability arising from any use of geospatial data that is shared.

ATTACHMENT #2



Current Representatives of the Southeast Zone Board

- Steve Miranda – U.S. Forest Service
- Tyler Chesarek – National Park Service
- Damon McRae – Bureau of Land Management
- Chris Ruff – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Tina Juan – Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Lathe Evan – Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management