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• STATE GOVERNMENT

By LIAM DILLON

Following devastating wildfires, Gov. Jerry Brown will examine forestry policies



An aerial view shows burned-out homes in Ventura County following the Thomas fire. (Brian van der Brug / Los Angeles Times)

A new task force of scientists and forestry experts will “review thoroughly the way our forests are managed and suggest ways to reduce the threat of devastating fires,” Gov. Jerry Brown announced in his State of the State speech Thursday.

Brown cited California’s growing severity of wildfires — eight of the state’s most destructive have occurred in the last five years — and the effects of climate change as driving the need to develop new forestry policies.

The governor said the task force also will examine how the state can increase resiliency and carbon storage capacity in forests.

“Trees in California should absorb CO₂, not generate huge amounts of black carbon and greenhouse gas as they do today when forest fires rage across the land,” Brown said in his speech.

When Brown announced his proposed state budget earlier this month, he included a significant uptick in funding for firefighting capability, continuing a years-long effort at spending more on fire prevention.