

Editorial: Fire is a statewide issue

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Fire has a tipping point in hot, dry weather. As the relative humidity drops – 22 percent is the magic number, according to fire officials – benign situations can morph into catastrophes.

A car with a hot engine parked near some dead brush, barbecue coals tossed into the trash, even a lawnmower hitting a rock during a California fire season can set off a conflagration. Three years of drought have just upped the ante.

Just last week in Orange County's Silverado Canyon, a jerry-built garden fence made out of metal sheeting got so hot that it touched off a 1,600-acre brush fire.

Californians tend to think of this as a rural problem. It isn't. This year's fire fear isn't just about Pollock Pines and Weed.

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