

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS LINDSEY P. HORVATH
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Los Angeles County Fire Recovery Fund

Beginning January 7, 2025, the January 2025 Windstorm and Critical Fire Events (Fire Events) (including Palisades Fire, Eaton Fire, Hurst Fire, Kenneth Fire, Hughes Fire, and other fires) have caused unprecedented catastrophic devastation across Los Angeles County communities. As of January 19, 2025, the impact has been wide reaching destroying over 14,000 residential and commercial structures. When the damage assessment is completed, this figure will increase. Too many lives have been lost, and there has been extensive destruction to homes, apartments, small businesses, and nonprofit organizations which all served as the lifeblood of these neighborhoods. Many evacuated families do not have a home to return to and are coming to grips with the loss of irreplaceable family heirlooms and memorabilia. In response, government at all levels has collaborated to expeditiously stand-up sheltering operations and large-scale relief efforts that support immediate needs and connect people to necessary services and resources.

Simultaneous to the tremendous emergency response, it is essential that we plan for recovery to rebuild communities so they are vibrant once again. In this recovery, it is

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imperative that the County step up to provide resources to residents who no longer have a home, to workers who have lost jobs because their employer's business burned down, and to small businesses and nonprofits that have been destroyed. In this rebuilding, the Board has clearly indicated the importance of equity and supporting those most impacted and most vulnerable.

To respond to this moment, we as a region must coalesce and create a unified Los Angeles County Fire Recovery Fund (Fund) to provide financial resources to the multiple impacted communities across the County. The County is leading in establishing financial and other supports for recovery in partnership with impacted cities and community partners. While the fires cross jurisdictional boundaries, we must centralize and coordinate relief and recovery efforts and ensure we do not further burden or traumatize those impacted. This Fund would be the repository for the incredible generosity across the County and globe, from people that want to help and support. The County has the ability and desire to collaborate and partner to meet this need. Coalescing the funds in this manner is the most effective and efficient way to strategically and tactically support impacted communities. This Fund builds on the Board efforts to respond to this emergency.

Beginning on January 7, 2025, the Board of Supervisors (Board), and other local, state, and federal governments have taken multiple actions to respond to the Fire Events. On January 14, 2025, the Board of Supervisors approved a motion that among other things, directed the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to develop a plan to enter into an agreement with a third-party intermediary to implement and administer the Fund to support victims impacted by the Fire Events, including but not limited to business

interruption, worker relief, childcare, housing assistance, relocation and other essential needs.

On January 21, 2025, the CEO provided a report back on the January 14, 2025, motion which identified County dollars for the Fund; a structure for the Fund; the creation of a portal for donors to support victims; an update on legislative action; and the status of efforts to ensure educational continuity. Given the needs of the moment, the County is best positioned to respond via the Fund by contracting with a third-party administrator who has experience working with community and residents, has a track record of linguistically and culturally engaging multiple impacted communities, and the capacity to implement rapidly. The Fund would provide direct cash aid to homeowners, renters, business owners, workers, and other community members impacted by the Fire Events. The Fund will provide immediate, temporary assistance to impacted residents until longer term State and Federal recovery resources become available.

While disasters do not discriminate, recovery has historically left those most vulnerable without needed support or resources to recover. The Board is unequivocally committed to ensuring a just and equitable recovery from the Fire Events. Accordingly, the Fund should prioritize those most immediately and directly impacted by the fires, especially people whose homes were completely destroyed by the fires. Furthermore, the County must step up to provide grants to the destroyed small business owners and their workers. Consistent with the CEO's Report, within these priority groups, the Fund should also consider marginalized communities most vulnerable to instability as a result of the Fire Events, which would include low- and fixed-income people, residents with limited English proficiency, people with disability or special health needs, older adults and those

ineligible to receive Federal or State aid. The intention of the Fund is to support people most severely impacted, giving highest priority to someone who lost both their home and their business/job.

The CEO has worked closely with Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) who has examined the feasibility of establishing small business and worker funds, two of the populations the County seeks to serve through the Fund. DEO initiated this work and has developed preliminary program design and structure, has developed partnerships to implement the funds, and along with the Center for Strategic Partnerships, has begun fundraising efforts through foundations and corporate partners.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Approve the CEO's recommendations in her report dated January 21, 2025, and direct the CEO to launch the Los Angeles County Fire Recovery Fund (Fund) to provide direct cash aid to homeowners, renters, business owners, workers, and other impacted community members in the Fire Events. The Fund will provide immediate, temporary assistance to impacted residents until longer term State and Federal recovery resources become available;
2. Direct the CEO to reallocate \$32.2 million in ARPA-enabled funding, as described in her report dated January 21, 2025, to the Fund;
3. Direct the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA), in collaboration with the CEO and in consultation with the CEO's Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiative and the Poverty Alleviation Initiative to administer the Fund on behalf of the County, including developing a simplified application, providing program administration services, directly distributing funds to eligible residents

prioritizing those most impacted, providing technical assistance, tracking and reporting how funds are distributed, authorize the Director of DCBA to amend existing contracts, and enter into new contracts, to launch and administer the Fund. In administering the Fund, DCBA must follow the overarching principles identified in the CEO's January 21, 2025, and use the criteria attached to the CEO's report. All applications materials and outreach related to the Fund must be culturally and linguistically competent;

4. Delegate authority to DCBA, or their designee, to negotiate, execute, and amend (as necessary) agreements to implement and advance Directive #3. The Board shall waive the requirements of Board Policy No. 5.100 for these agreements for up to three years to implement the Fund. These agreements and any amendment(s) shall be approved as to form by County Counsel;
5. Direct DCBA and DEO to report back in 7 days with an update on implementation progress and an estimated timeline for launching and funding applications; These Funds should first fund and prioritize those most immediately and directly impacted by the Fire Events;
6. Direct DCBA and DEO to provide regular updates to the Board on the progress on implementing and disbursing all Funds to support residents, workers, and small businesses;
7. To the extent the CEO, DEO, and DCBA have taken any actions, including but not limited to executing contracts, to launch the Funds described above after the filing of the January 21, 2025, report, but before the approval of this motion, ratify such actions; and

8. Direct CEO to continue to identify available County dollars that can be repositioned to support victims of the fires.

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