

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR LINDSEY P. HORVATH

February 18, 2025

**Supporting a Skilled and Trained Workforce for Fire Recovery**

The devastation resulting from the January 2025 wildfires in Los Angeles County (County) is unparalleled in scale and scope: over 50,000 acres burned, over 16,000 structures destroyed, and almost 30 lives lost to date. As the County moves into the recovery phase, cleanup efforts, occurring in two distinct phases, and led by federal agencies, are underway.

Phase one work, directed by the Environmental Protection Agency (E.P.A.), entails removing hazardous waste. The E.P.A. manages workers qualified to remove hazardous materials to clear the area of particularly dangerous items such as lithium-ion batteries, pesticides, and paint cans.

Once phase one is completed, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) takes the lead for phase two, which involves removal of structural debris, foundations, recyclable metals, and hazardous trees.

Conditions on the ground in the burn areas are equally dangerous. The ash that covers the burn areas consists of high levels of heavy metal and other toxins. The

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complexity of the debris removal, combined with noxious environmental factors, require skilled and trained workers to safely complete the work so rebuilding can begin. Trade union apprenticeship programs offer individuals a career pathway where they receive high-quality, on-the-job training leading to a family-sustaining career with excellent health and retirement benefits, allowing individuals to “earn while they learn” through paid, hands-on training combined with classroom instruction. These workers are highly trained in specialized skills such as hazardous material removal, health and safety standards, and personal protective equipment.

On January 16, 2025, the U.S. Department of Labor announced \$10 million –in emergency grant funding to California to support disaster-relief jobs and training services for those affected by the devastating wildfires in Los Angeles County. This funding is being administered by the County’s Department of Economic Opportunity. Allocating the \$10 million to the Los Angeles/Orange Counties Building and Construction Trades Council (LA/OC Building Trades) - Apprenticeship Readiness Fund would fulfill the conditions of the emergency grant funding from the federal government as the debris removal work will likely be performed by members of the LA/OC Building Trades.

**I, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors direct County Counsel, in collaboration with the Department of Economic Opportunity to report back in writing in 14 days on the feasibility of allocating the \$10 million received from the U.S. Department of Labor on January 16, 2025, to the Los Angeles/Orange Counties Building and Construction Trades Council - Apprenticeship Readiness Fund to create a pipeline of skilled and trained workers. The report back should also include alternative sources of unspent funds administered by the Department of Economic Opportunity to reallocate to

the Los Angeles/Orange Counties Building and Construction Trades Council -  
Apprenticeship Readiness Fund should it be found ineligible for the U.S. Department of  
Labor emergency grant funding.

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