



MARK PESTRELLA, Director

## COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

*"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"*

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IN REPLY PLEASE  
REFER TO FILE

July 01, 2025

The Honorable Board of Supervisors  
County of Los Angeles  
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 West Temple Street  
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES CORE SERVICE AREA  
TEMPORARY WAIVER TO INCREASE DISPOSAL  
TONNAGE LIMITS AT SUNSHINE CANYON LANDFILL  
(SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS 3 AND 5)  
(3 VOTES)**

**SUBJECT**

Public Works is seeking Board approval for an extension to the February 25, 2025, Board approval to temporarily increase the short-term disposal tonnage limits at Sunshine Canyon Landfill to allow for proper disposal of fire-related debris from the January 2025 Windstorm and Critical Fire Events, including the Palisades Fire, Eaton Fire, Hurst Fire, Kenneth Fire, and multiple other fires.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE BOARD:**

1. Find that the proposed activities recommended herein are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act for the reasons stated in this Board letter and in the record of the project.
2. Authorize the Sunshine Canyon Landfill to extend their temporary increase in their tonnage limits authorized under its Conditional Use Permit, by 2,900 tons from 12,100 tons to 15,000 tons per day with a corresponding increase in the weekly tonnage limit, for an additional 120 days and with a possibility for extension by the Board, upon joint recommendation from the Directors of Public Health and Public Works, as part of disaster response and recovery efforts and when it is in the public interest to do so, provided that the excess tonnage amounts consist solely of debris resulting from the January 2025 Windstorm and Critical Fire Events.

## **PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Approval of the recommended actions will find that the proposed activities are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and authorize the extension to increase the short-term disposal tonnage limits at Sunshine Canyon Landfill to allow proper disposal of debris resulting from the January 2025 Windstorm and Critical Fire Events.

Starting on January 7, 2025, the County of Los Angeles was impacted by severe and life-threatening windstorms and resulting wind-driven destructive fires (January 2025 Windstorm and Critical Fire Events), including the Palisades Fire, Eaton Fire, Hurst Fire, Kenneth Fire, and multiple other fires (collectively, LA County Fires). These unprecedented, simultaneous, sudden, and unforeseen events caused loss of life and widespread damage and destruction to residential structures, businesses, public facilities and infrastructure, power outages, downed trees, road closures, and significant debris.

On January 7, 2025, the Chair of the County Board of Supervisors proclaimed the existence of a local emergency for the January 2025 Windstorm and Critical Fire Events (Proclamation of Local Emergency) in the County. Similarly, the Governor proclaimed a state of emergency, and the President approved a major disaster declaration in the County. The Board ratified the Proclamation of Local Emergency on January 14, 2025. The Proclamation of Local Emergency enables the County to more effectively respond to the January 2025 Windstorm and Critical Fire Events to accelerate the procurement of vital supplies, carry out cleanup and reconstruction efforts, seek and utilize mutual aid, and seek State and Federal funding assistance.

Due to the devastating destruction of property, the LA County Fires have resulted in huge volumes of fire debris that must be removed immediately to reduce and eliminate immediate threats to life, public health and safety, and/or significant damage to property, including improved property, and to ensure economic recovery of the affected communities to the benefit of the community-at-large. Materials taken to Sunshine Canyon Landfill will not include household hazardous waste.

As of May 31, 2025, disaster debris removal is ongoing, and more than half of the properties affected by the LA County Fires that opted into the government-sponsored debris removal program have completed cleanup. Therefore, an extension to provide disposal capacity is necessary to support the continued safe and effective removal of fire debris within the affected communities.

## **Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals**

These recommendations support the County Strategic Plan: North Star 2, Foster Vibrant and Resilient Communities, Focus Area Goal D, Sustainability, Strategy i, Climate Health, by providing a safe and efficient way to dispose of debris resulting from the January 2025 Windstorm and Critical Fire Events.

## **FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING**

There will be no impact to the County General Fund.

## **FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS**

Regional landfills, including Sunshine Canyon Landfill, have been accepting debris resulting from the LA County Fires in accordance with Federal, State, and Local agencies' guidelines. The operator of Sunshine Canyon Landfill submitted a letter on May 19, 2025, requesting that the Joint County/City

Local Enforcement Agency (County/City LEA) extend Sunshine Canyon Landfill's emergency waiver for an additional 120 days, increasing the permitted disposal limits and extending the hours of operation on an emergency basis to the extent that is within the County/City LEA authority to do so. The County/City LEA granted the extension on May 23, 2025.

The Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for Sunshine Canyon Landfill imposes daily and weekly tonnage limits but provides that the Board can increase these limits upon the joint recommendation of the Departments of Public Health and Public Works as necessary to appropriately manage the overall County waste stream for the protection of public health and safety. In accordance with the CUP, Public Health, acting as the Local Enforcement Agency, and Public Works jointly recommend that the Board allow:

1. Sunshine Canyon Landfill to increase the daily tonnage limit authorized under its CUP by 2,900 tons, from 12,100 tons to 15,000 tons per day, with a corresponding increase in the weekly tonnage limit, provided that the excess tonnage amount consists solely of debris related to the LA County Fires.

The recommended actions are in response to the January 2025 Windstorm and Critical Fire Events and are necessary to reduce or eliminate immediate threats to life, public health and safety, and improved property, as well as to ensure economic recovery of the affected communities to the benefit of the community-at-large.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION**

The recommended actions are statutorily exempt from CEQA. Approval of the temporary increase in the short-term disposal tonnage limits at Sunshine Canyon Landfill is in response to emergency conditions created by the January 2025 Windstorm and Critical Fire Events and is necessary to reduce and eliminate sudden and unexpected immediate threats to life, public health and safety, and property, including improved property and essential public services, and is therefore exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 21080, Subdivisions (b)(3) and (4) of the Public Resources Code and Section 15269, Subdivisions (a) and (c) of the State CEQA Guidelines.

The significant amount of fire-related debris exceeds the permitted capacity of local waste disposal capabilities. A temporary increase in the short-term disposal tonnage limits at Sunshine Canyon Landfill is necessary to allow proper disposal of fire-related debris without disrupting regular solid waste operations.

Upon the Board's approval of the recommended actions, Public Works will file a new Notice of Exemption with the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk and with the State Clearinghouse at the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation in accordance with Section 21152 of the Public Resources Code and will post the notice to the County's website in accordance with Section 21092.2.

### **IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)**

There will be no impact on current services as a result of the required action.

**CONCLUSION**

Please return one adopted copy of this Board letter to Public Works, Environmental Programs Division.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Pestrella". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Pestrella".

MARK PESTRELLA, PE

Director

MP:MH:et

c: Chief Executive Office (Chia-Ann Yen)  
County Counsel  
Executive Office, Board of Supervisors  
Los Angeles County Sanitation District