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**Support for Senate Bill 256 (Pérez): Enhancing Infrastructure for Wildfire**

**Mitigation**

The January 2025 wildfires caused death as well as damages estimated between \$28.0 and \$53.8 billion and business disruption projected to cause \$4.6 billion to \$8.9 billion in lost economic output for Los Angeles County (County). <sup>1</sup>

To reduce wildfire risks the California Public Utilities Commission, with direction from the California State Legislature, approved a long-term power line undergrounding program that allows large investor-owned utilities to submit 10-year plans for review to the Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety.<sup>2</sup> In response to the January 2025 wildfires, Governor Gavin Newsom signed an executive order to fast-track the rebuilding of underground utility systems in fire-damaged areas of the County including Altadena,

<sup>1</sup> Institute for Applied Economics. *Impact of 2025 Los Angeles Wildfires and Comparative Study*. Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation, Feb. 2025.

<sup>2</sup> “CPUC Launches New Undergrounding Program to Expedite System Hardening and Enhance Climate Resilience.” <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/news-and-updates/all-news/cpuc-launches-new-undergrounding-program-2024>

**MOTION**

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Malibu, and the Pacific Palisades to prevent future fires.<sup>3</sup> While Wildfire Mitigation Plan (WMP) guidelines prioritize high-risk areas, gaps in planning highlight the need to reassess vulnerabilities, including in low-risk zones that still face threats.

Senate Bill (SB) 256, *Enhancing Infrastructure for Wildfire Mitigation*, by Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, crafted as a direct result of the January 2025 wildfires, would strengthen wildfire and emergency management by addressing past coordination gaps, improving preparedness and requiring collaboration between utilities and government emergency centers. Additionally, it would require consideration of undergrounding where it is cost-effective for areas rebuilding after a wildfire and the consideration of other fire mitigation techniques in fire affected areas while ensuring the infrastructure costs are not past on to ratepayers.

**WE, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Office Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations to support Senate Bill 256 (Pérez) which strengthens California's electrical infrastructure by improving wildfire mitigation planning, enhancing emergency response, and increasing public safety through improved communication and undergrounding of power lines and requiring utilities to work more closely with emergency services and communities to prevent wildfires and manage power shutoffs safely and transparently.

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<sup>3</sup> "MSN." Msn.com, 2025, <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/other/newsom-signs-order-to-speed-up-wildfire-recovery-in-malibu-altadena/ar-AA1BNt0s?ocid=BingNewsSerp>