

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR LINDSEY P. HORVATH

September 30, 2025

Keeping Residents Safe by Investing Resources in Emergency Management – After Action Review Critical Focus Area #1 - Restructuring the LA County Office of Emergency Management

The January 2025 Windstorm and Critical Fire Events demonstrated firsthand the critical need that LA County has for effective emergency preparedness, response, and recovery. With over 37,000 acres burned and over 20,000 structures destroyed, these were the most destructive fires in LA County's history. As the County looks at lessons learned from this experience and how we create stronger, more resilient communities, it is essential that we prioritize the effective structure and funding of our LA County Office of Emergency Management.

The LA County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) performs several important services to our communities including organizing and directing the preparedness efforts as the emergency management organization of LA County, leading County response efforts to emerging disasters, and coordinating with departments and outside agencies on recovery efforts post disasters. LA County is one of the most

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disaster-prone areas in the country with emergencies ranging from fires, floods, and earthquakes to pandemics, civil unrest, and hazardous material releases. We need to further empower the OEM to be the lead organizer within the County to prepare, respond, and recover from disasters.

As the McCrystal Group has illustrated from their research in the After-Action Review (AAR) of Alert Notification Systems and Evacuation Policies for the Eaton and Palisades Fires, the County's current structure and investment in OEM hinders its ability to comprehensively perform emergency management duties necessary for a County of ten million residents with 21st century environmental, public health, and political threats. The absence of clear authority undermines OEM's ability to enforce standardized practices across County organizations, creating accountability gaps and reducing the effectiveness of coordinated planning and response efforts. Given the rise in local emergencies that our County continues to face, we need an Emergency Management Department with its own autonomy, increased staffing, more clearly delineated authority framework, and a separate, stable operating budget.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Office to provide a written feasibility report with next steps in 60 days to implement the AAR recommendation to initiate a restructuring of OEM's organizational framework to address the lack of autonomy and fragmented authority that currently undermines its ability to coordinate emergency management effectively. The report should consider the feasibility of moving OEM out of the CEO's office, to an organizational framework that enhances its autonomy and authority. The report should include but not be limited to:

1. Current staffing levels and funding within the OEM, including federal, state, and local grants; anticipated staffing levels, including surge staffing during activations, space needs, and funding considerations.
2. Assessment of whether OEM's current structure aligns with its coordination responsibilities and best practices in emergency management. Establish clear authority frameworks and standardized operational protocols, including updates to Standard Operating Procedures for emergency activations, messaging protocols, and partner coordination.
3. A high-level schedule for the creation of the new department of OEM and the transition of programs and funding, with a focus on "critical path" milestones to ensure that the Board and the public are aware of the action items and associated processes that must be completed and by when.

a) The schedule/report should include:

- A summary of County programs and functions that will transition to the new County department, should the Board choose to create the new County Department.
- A functional organizational chart, to be refined as the process continues, and description of programs that will operate out of the new department.
- Any proposed phasing of department operations, funding transfers, department's projected staffing needs, necessary classifications, and job duties.

I, FURTHER, MOVE, that the Board of Supervisors direct the CEO to provide the

following additional written information:

1. Within 90 days, a preliminary summary of County OEM programs and functions that will transition to the new County department/organization, should the Board choose to create the new County Department, including a functional “end-state” organizational chart, to be refined as the process continues, and description of programs that will operate out of the new department. The report should describe any proposed phasing of department operations, funding transfers, department’s projected staffing needs, necessary classifications, and job duties.
2. Within 120 days, a fiscal and staffing plan for the new department, which should include, but not be limited to, all emergency programs and funding sources across Departments which will be consolidated into the new department.

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