

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR KATHRYN BARGERAGN. NO.
SEPTEMBER 30, 2025**IMPLEMENTING AFTER ACTION REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE
JANUARY 2025 EATON AND PALISADES FIRES**

Our communities are still grappling with the devastating losses from the Eaton and Palisades fires. These fires were the most destructive in the County's history, resulting in 31 confirmed deaths, loss of more than 16,000 structures, and devastating nearly 37,000 acres of land.

While Los Angeles County Departments worked together with other emergency partners to assess the trajectory of the fire, weather conditions, and topography to identify threatened areas to initiate effective evacuation orders and effectively fight the fire – questions arose about the process used for evacuations, and the partners involved in issuing evacuation warning and orders.

Before the fires were fully contained, I authored a motion, co-authored by Supervisor Lindsay Horvath, that called for an independent review of evacuation policies and emergency alert notification systems utilized by the County in responding to the Palisades and Eaton Fires. The McChrystal Group was selected to conduct the After-Action Review (AAR). The Los Angeles County Fire Department (FIRE), the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD), and the Chief Executive Office's Office of Emergency Management (CEO-OEM) all participated in the AAR. McChrystal Group collected and reviewed public and County data and documents, conducted interviews with first responders and County personnel, and surveyed the community and conducted community meetings to gather input from fire survivors.

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The McChrystal Group has now completed its review and released its findings and recommendations. This is the first major action report to be released following the January Fires with many more underway. While first responders on the ground acted decisively and, in many cases, heroically, in the face of extraordinary conditions, the report underscored the need for the County to have clearer policies, stronger training, integrated tools, and improved public communication. McChrystal Group's findings and actionable recommendations are grouped into five areas, as summarized below and detailed more fully in the AAR:

1. Policies, Protocols, Standard Operating Procedures, and Authority
 - Updating policies and County Code to ensure that first responders and emergency management clearly understand roles and responsibilities related to making decisions to issue evacuation warnings and orders.
2. Training and Planning Coordination
 - Standardizing and enhancing preparedness and evacuation-specific training for all county departments and partners.
3. Resource Management
 - Restructuring the Office of Emergency Management and increasing staffing to a more robust level comparable to other large US city and county emergency management organizations.
4. Situational Awareness and Interoperability
 - Updating obsolete systems and technology to enable all emergency response communications to leverage the Los Angeles Regional Interoperable Communications System known as LA-RICS.
5. Community Engagement and Public Information and Outreach
 - Developing a robust and consistent public education campaign across the County to increase public preparedness.

Los Angeles County, which encompasses 4,084 square miles, includes topography and land ownership patterns which further complicate wildfire response and preparedness. The County encompasses mountains, foothills, canyons, and open space that are managed by a patchwork of local, County, State, and Federal agencies. For example, Eaton Canyon Natural Area is managed by the County, while Angeles National Forest falls under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Forest Service. The Santa Monica Mountains include lands managed by the National Park Service, California State Parks, the County of Los Angeles, and local cities such as Malibu and Calabasas.

Since 2015, California has experienced a dramatic escalation in the frequency, intensity, and destructiveness of wildfires. Eight of the ten most destructive wildfires in state history have occurred in the past decade, fueled by periods of drought, record-breaking heat, and the need for greater management of open space and wildland areas.

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These fires have caused tens of billions of dollars in damage, displaced hundreds of thousands of residents, and overwhelmed emergency response systems. The Eaton and Palisades Fires are part of this alarming trend, underscoring the urgent need for Los Angeles County to adapt to this new reality and invest in resilient, coordinated, and technology-driven emergency management systems.

The Eaton and Palisades Fires were not isolated events—they are harbingers of a new era of climate-driven disasters. Los Angeles County must act now to modernize its emergency infrastructure, empower its emergency management leadership, and protect its residents from future catastrophes.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS request LASD and direct Fire and CEO-OEM to immediately implement the recommendations in the AAR and provide a joint progress report back to the Board in 90 days, and every 90 days thereafter until the recommendations are implemented. The progress report shall include, but not be limited to the following:

1. A timeline for implementation of all the recommendations and the status of their efforts in implementing each recommendation in the AAR;
2. A list of any additional recommendations, above and beyond those included in the AAR, proposed or already initiated by each agency; and,
3. Any challenges or barriers to implementing any of the recommendations.

I, FURTHER, MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS instruct the Chief Executive Officer to work with the Fire, LASD, and OEM to assess the fiscal impact of the recommendations included in the AAR, and report back to the Board with recommendations in 90 days, including a thorough review of potential funding sources including reallocation of existing resources where applicable and appropriate.

I, FURTHER, MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS instruct the Chief Executive Officer to report back in 90 days with an evaluation of the current and future placement of OEM within the County structure. The evaluation should include recommendations that specifically align OEM's structure and resources with best practices from comparable jurisdictions, as included in the McChrystal Report (e.g., NYC, Cook County, San Diego) to determine whether OEM should remain with CEO, be moved to another department, or be its own standalone department.

I, FURTHER, MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS instruct CEO-OEM to report back in 90 days with an update on past efforts to identify and deploy non-digital emergency alert systems like community sirens, air horns, and vehicle-mounted loudspeakers in high-risk and communications-vulnerable areas.

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