

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS KATHRYN BARGER AND
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NOVEMBER 4, 2025

**SUPPORT FOR EXPANDED SOIL TESTING FOR LEAD AROUND THE BURN
AREAS AND SOIL REMEDIATION OF RESIDENTIAL PARCELS WITH HIGHEST
LEVELS OF LEAD TO ASSIST RESIDENTS IMPACTED BY THE EATON AND
PALISADES FIRES**

The January 2025 Eaton and Palisades urban wildfires caused unprecedented devastation to these communities displacing over 200,000 people, destroying more than 16,000 structures, and burning over 40,000 acres. Nine months after the fires, 7 out of 10 residents remain displaced; just 1 in 5 Altadena residents and 1 in 10 Pacific Palisades residents have returned to their pre-fire homes. Post fire environmental sampling suggests that exposure to contaminants dangerous to human health is cause for concern.

Breaking precedent from previous federally-supported fire clean-up operations, including those following the Camp Fire, Woolsey Fire, and North Complex Fire, the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and FEMA declined to conduct post-debris removal soil confirmation testing for toxic substances to ensure adequate debris removal.

In response to potential health risks from fire-related contaminants, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) has offered free blood lead testing for individuals concerned about lead exposure. Lead poisoning is usually determined by a blood test with results measured in micrograms per deciliter (mcg/dL). The ideal blood lead level would be zero for any individual, but the national average is about 2mcg/dL; levels at or above 3.5 mcg/dL are a concern. DPH has reported that blood lead testing in the Eaton Fire area has found that the vast majority of tested residents have blood lead levels below the CDC reference value of 3.5 g/dL. While representative soil testing confirmed some levels of lead contamination in the area only seven adults of the close to 2,000 individuals tested had blood lead level above the reference value.

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To allow residents near the Eaton Fire burn area to evaluate the soil on their residential lots for lead contamination, DPH created a program in May 2025 that allows residents to have a composite sample of their soil tested for lead by a certified laboratory and receive the results without cost. To date residents have sent over 1,600 soil samples for testing.

To assist the County in supporting local recovery efforts, the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), in coordination with CalRecycle, has provided Guidance for the 2025 Los Angeles Wildfires to provide soil testing considerations, guidance on interpreting results, as well as information on remediation methods.

The Community-Oriented Network for Scientific Observation, Recovery, and Tracking of Impacts from Urban Megafires (CONSORTIUM)—an interdisciplinary collaborative representing teams from CAP.LA, USC CLEAN, and the LA Fire HEALTH Study, and a dozen research universities and institutions—has identified additional outstanding soil sampling and testing needs for residents affected by the fires. The limited scale of soil confirmation testing and necessary remediation to date leaves fire-impacted community residents with questions of whether their soil is contaminated with lead and necessary actions to mitigate this risk. Philanthropy-backed interdisciplinary research teams have mobilized to develop and deliver free soil testing services, contaminant analysis, and other research science responsive to impacted community needs, and the State appropriated \$2 million to the California Community Foundation for collaboration with the CONSORTIUM on a pilot project to remediate homes with the highest levels of lead contamination in the Eaton burn area.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Direct the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), to send a letter of support to the California Community Foundation and the CONSORTIUM (Community-Oriented Network for Scientific Observation, Recovery, and Tracking of Impacts of Urban Megafire) for the creation of a pilot project, using \$2 million in funding appropriated by the State of California, to remediate residential properties with the highest levels of lead soil in the Eaton fire burn area.
2. Instruct the Director of Public Health to extend the availability of its Eaton Fire Soil Lead Testing Program to residents living within and downwind of the Palisades burn area.

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3. Direct the Chief Executive Office Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations (CEO-LAIR) to send a five-signature letter from the Board to the California Insurance Commissioner urging him to investigate ways to facilitate a cost-effective method for insurance companies to make resources available for residential soil testing and soil remediation of the contaminants found by such soil testing, such as through the establishment of volume purchasing agreements or low-cost financing options for residents of the impacted communities.
4. Direct the CEO to report back within 60 days identifying additional recommended funding sources, including from the State and other financing resources to expand residential soil-testing and soil remediation pilot programs.
5. Direct the Center for Strategic Partnership (CSP) and the Department of Public Health (DPH) in collaboration with CEO-LAIR, and community stakeholders to seek funding to support soil testing and soil remediation for fire damaged and neighboring properties, including expanding soil remediation to all fire impacted areas. Philanthropic, private, local, state and federal opportunities should be explored, and report back to the Board in writing in 60 days.

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