

**REVISED MOTION BY SUPERVISOR JANICE HAHN
AND SUPERVISOR KATHRYN BARGER**

AGN. NO.
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Ensuring All Eligible Youth are Screened for the Pine Grove Youth Conservation Camp When Requested

As Los Angeles County (County) approaches the one-year anniversary of the most devastating wildfires in recent history, it is important to honor the first responders who risked their lives to protect County residents. Among them were incarcerated firefighters, including youth from the Pine Grove Youth Conservation Camp (Pine Grove) in Pine Grove, California, who helped combat the fires that ravaged Altadena and the Pacific Palisades. Across the country, a spotlight has been placed on the value and importance of incarcerated firefighters now more than ever before. In fact, on October 13, 2025, Governor Newsom signed Assembly Bill 247 (Bryan)¹ into law, which requires that incarcerated hand crew members, including youth at Pine Grove, would be paid an hourly wage while assigned to an active fire incident. This demonstrates the growing recognition across the State that incarcerated firefighters deserve to be compensated for their labor, and it highlights the benefits of participating in programs like Pine Grove for system-involved youth.

Today, Los Angeles County faces a crisis: both Los Padrinos and Barry J. Nidorf

¹ https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260AB247

MOTION

MITCHELL	_____
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HAHN	_____
BARGER	_____
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Juvenile Halls have been declared unsuitable by the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC). The Los Angeles County Probation Department (Probation) has the option to use Pine Grove as an alternative placement for some eligible youth to complete their sentences. Pine Grove, which is run by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), is considered a step-down placement, meaning youth who are dispositioned as Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF) track can “step down” and complete their sentence at Pine Grove’s campus in northern California. To qualify for placement at Pine Grove without completing SYTF, youth at Probation’s facilities are required to have been in custody for 12 consecutive months, have documentation of positive programming while in custody during those 12 consecutive months (ex: education, self-help groups, following an individual rehabilitation plan, etc.), been serious discipline-free for 180 days, been dispositioned, passed a medical screening, and be between 18 and 25 years old. Once these criteria are met, the youth’s attorneys could request that the judge order the youth be officially screened for participation in Pine Grove via a minute order, and Probation would submit a package to Pine Grove asking for the official screening to take place. Over the past six months, no youth have been successfully referred to and placed at Pine Grove as a step-down program.

Under Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) 875(a)(3), Probation has an obligation to recommend the least restrictive placement that meets a youth’s rehabilitative needs and ensures community safety. While a judge makes the ultimate decision regarding a youth’s disposition and placement, Probation submits pre-plea reports recommending suitable outcomes if a youth’s charges are sustained. For many youth, Pine Grove may be a more suitable, less restrictive placement, than incarceration at one of the County’s post-disposition facilities, and Probation should put every effort into ensuring as many

youth who qualify and are interested have the opportunity to be screened and placed there.

In addition to Probation's duty to recommend the least restrictive placement, the department has also been ordered by the Los Angeles County Superior Court to pre-screen pre-disposition youth to determine their preliminary qualification for Pine Grove. On December 13, 2024, Judge Miguel Espinoza issued an Order to Show Cause as to why youth detained at Los Padrinos should not be released following the BSCC's finding of unsuitability. On May 16, 2025, as a part of his order to depopulate Los Padrinos, Judge Espinoza ordered Probation to identify all pre-disposition youth who appear to be suitable for placement at Pine Grove, youth who could qualify to be screened by CDCR for participation in Pine Grove, and to provide information to the Court with identified youth who Probation would recommend a commitment at Pine Grove. On July 3, 2025, Probation responded, asserting that CDCR can screen youth for Pine Grove only after a judge orders an SYTF commitment. Chief Probation Officer Guillermo Viera Rosa repeated this claim before the Board of Supervisors on September 16, 2025.

However, this interpretation misapplies the law, as both pre- and post-disposition youth can lawfully be screened. Pine Grove has a policy and procedure in place for pre-disposition youth to be preliminarily screened for Pine Grove – known as “pre-screening.” A judge can request that a youth be pre-screened for Pine Grove during the disposition process or during a transfer hearing, where a judge determines whether a youth stays in juvenile jurisdiction or is transferred to adult court. This pre-screening process entails Probation completing a one-page pre-screening request form and submitting it to the judge, who would then email it to CDCR's Pine Grove screening division. Pine Grove's screening division would then review the completed request form and provide a

preliminary determination of the youth's suitability for Pine Grove, which is based primarily on the youth's charge. This first level of screening does not require that a youth be dispositioned to SYTF or any other placement. Instead, it allows the youth's judge to see that if they were to be dispositioned to a County juvenile detention facility, they would or would not qualify for an eventual placement at Pine Grove. This can be beneficial, especially during transfer hearings, so that the judge knows that Pine Grove is an option for youth who may be better suited for that program than the traditional SYTF program in Probation's detention facilities.

While pre-screenings are helpful for a youth's case, completing the full screening quickly and efficiently is essential to ensuring more youth are successfully transferred to Pine Grove. Once a youth has been dispositioned to SYTF or has completed their transfer hearing and is in the process of being dispositioned to SYTF, the process for the full Pine Grove screening can begin. According to WIC 730 (D), youth can be placed directly at Pine Grove without the need to complete the SYTF program or a step-down program, as long as the youth meet the screening criteria of 12 consecutive months in custody, serious disciplinary free for 180 days, and documented positive programming during those twelve months. This means that youth do not need to move to the Barry J. Nidorf Secure Youth Treatment Facility campus from their pre-disposition location in order to be placed at Pine Grove. Instead, once a youth has been dispositioned to SYTF, the Pine Grove screening can commence, and once the screening is complete, the youth can be placed directly at Pine Grove rather than needing to be moved to the SYTF facility first.

While Probation has always had a duty to ensure eligible youth can step down to less restrictive placements like Pine Grove, that mandate is even more salient and urgent considering the lack of suitability of Los Padrinos and Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Halls and

Judge Espinoza's depopulation order. However, it is important to acknowledge that Pine Grove is not a mandated program and youth have to opt into. Because of this, referrals to Pine Grove also hinge on the Department's ability to effectively communicate to youth so they know Pine Grove is a potential option. The Probation Department, and youth's attorneys, should ensure all youth are aware of Pine Grove, and know how they can qualify. Instead of discouraging participation in Pine Grove, Probation employees should ensure youth receive an unbiased and accurate presentation of what it would take to attend Pine Grove, including qualifications, pros, cons, and the process needed to be screened and admitted.

!WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Probation Department to do the following:

1. When a judge requests that a youth be "pre-screened" during the pre-disposition process for eligibility to participate in the Pine Grove Youth Conservation Camp (Pine Grove), complete the pre-screening form as laid out in the Pine Grove policies and procedures and submit it to the judge within 14 days of receiving the request;
2. After a youth's transfer hearing that results in the judge determining that the youth will stay in juvenile jurisdiction, initiate the full screening process for Pine Grove as soon as requested by a judge and before the youth's sentencing hearing while they are still in the pre-disposition facility/unit. This screening process should include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Ensuring any medical documentation of psychiatric medications and asthma is accurate and up-to-date;
 - b. Submitting required documentation to Pine Grove in a timely manner (including the completed Pine Grove screening forms and the minute order from the

judge); and

- c. Ensuring the Pine Grove interview is conducted in a timely manner;
3. Identify a point person at the Barry J. Nidorf Pre-Disposition Secure Youth Treatment Facility and a point person at Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall to communicate with Pine Grove regarding all pre-screening and screening of youth in their respective facilities. These individuals shall, at a minimum, be responsible for ensuring that pre-screening and screening requests get completed and submitted on time;
4. Collaborate with Pine Grove to conduct quarterly presentations at both Barry J. Nidorf and Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall about the Pine Grove program and its eligibility requirements to both incarcerated youth and Probation employees; and
5. Report back to the Board of Supervisors in writing in 30 and 90 days on the above.

IWE, FURTHER, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Office of the Public Defender and Alternate Public Defender to do the following:

1. Conduct an internal education campaign for juvenile defense lawyers on the eligibility criteria for Pine Grove Youth Conservation Camp, the pre-screening process for pre-disposition youth, and the full screening process for post-disposition youth or youth who have completed their transfer hearing but are pre-disposition and awaiting their official juvenile sentencing hearing;
2. Encourage juvenile attorneys to request that the court order a full Pine Grove screening at the conclusion of a youth's transfer hearing if the youth is remaining in juvenile jurisdiction; and
3. Report back to the Board of Supervisors in writing in 60 days on the above.

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