

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS LINDSEY P. HORVATH

February 10, 2026

AND KATHRYN BARGER

**Establishing the Los Angeles County Disaster Recovery Rebuild Authority  
(Authority)**

In January 2025, Los Angeles County experienced one of the costliest US climate disasters with the Palisades and Eaton Fires. Thirty one lives were lost, more than 16,000 structures were damaged or destroyed, cherished heirlooms vanished causing estimated property and capital losses between \$76 billion and \$131 billion, with insured losses estimated up to \$45 billion. Los Angeles County led an historic and ambitious response to the fires. Our Chief Executive Office/Office of Emergency Management coordinated nine recovery taskforces collaborating to create unified policy among federal, state, county, and municipal partners to chart our recovery. As rebuilding continues to accelerate, there are tremendous challenges facing community and government such as financing and reconstructing public infrastructure, coordination of large-scale public and private construction activities, escalating costs of materials and labor, workforce shortages, and the need for direct financial solutions to support homeowners to rebuild to

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21st century safety in compliance with current safety and buildings standards.

Over a year after the disasters, the Department of Angels reports that 7 in 10 survivors are still not back in their homes and 50% of survivors have depleted their savings. As stated in the July 1, 2025, motion, “Legal Pathways to Establish a Rebuilding Authority”, approaching this recovery with a business-as-usual model will not meet the moment. After other disasters of similar magnitude, including the 1994 Northridge Earthquake, September 11th Terrorist Attacks, and Hurricane Katrina, unified reconstruction authorities were established to effectively plan, implement, and recover; Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) was a significant source of funding for recovery under these authorities. The County and State have yet to hear back from the federal administration on whether we will receive similar aid, as outlined in Governor Newsom’s supplemental disaster request. Even if we do not have the level of funding CDBG-DR provides, we must proactively and strategically deploy our human and fiscal resources to support wildfire survivors in their road to recovery.

Amid a fiscal crisis, the state has thankfully extended assistance. Normally, recovering from a disaster of this magnitude requires major federal investments. We cannot allow delays or uncertainty at the federal level to slow our recovery or distract us from the work that still needs to be done locally. This set of circumstances requires us to be more nimble, creative, and innovative than ever before. We have already received feedback that our current emergency management structure is not adequate for the size of our County. We must think outside of our current frameworks.

The Department of Angels reports that fire survivors’ trust in the pace and responsiveness of existing government systems is at its lowest point since the Fires. Two

groups of experts, both the independent Blue Ribbon Commission on Climate Action and Fire Safe Recovery, and the Urban Land Institute's Project Recovery, have recommended an all-of-government approach to streamline this complex rebuilding effort, prioritize and support the return of all residents and businesses, and implement proactive, large-scale fire mitigation projects, in partnership with all willing local government partners. Without bold, coordinated action, we risk further displacement, rising insurance costs, delaying recovery, and deepening community and first responder vulnerability to future fire events.

If federal support does come or significant additional philanthropy is received, having a dedicated recovery structure would facilitate quicker program implementation and infrastructure buildout. County Counsel's report back to the July 1, 2025, motion has already provided options for establishing such a structure. Furthermore, this Board has established a practice of setting up teams to proactively address critical issues that are Board priorities. Disaster recovery in unincorporated Altadena and the Santa Monica Mountains is a Board priority without a dedicated team to coordinate all efforts; creating one will only accelerate assistance.

After the January 2025 Fires, Los Angeles County's recovery efforts began with short-term task forces focused on immediate priorities: clearing debris, reopening roads, restoring utilities, and stabilizing fire impacted neighborhoods in Altadena and the unincorporated Santa Monica Mountains. These task forces operated in a rapid-response mode, ensuring safety and basic functionality for residents. However, as the emergency phase ended, the County recognized that rebuilding required more than temporary fixes—it demanded a coordinated, long-term strategy. This realization led to the creation of the LA County Rebuilding Blueprint in mid-2025, which shifted the focus from reactive repairs

to proactive planning. The Blueprint introduced a structured framework for recovery, emphasizing expedited permitting, cost reduction measures, workforce mobilization, and infrastructure restoration.

In support of the broader infrastructure recovery and rebuilding master planning efforts, the County established Disaster Recovery Financing Districts in both Altadena (Altadena Wildfire Recovery Financing District) and the unincorporated Santa Monica Mountains (Unincorporated Santa Monica Mountains Wildfire Disaster Recovery Financing District). The districts were established to provide a dedicated, long-term funding mechanism for rebuilding critical infrastructure and to support the work of the County Blueprint. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Works will continue to expand on the work of the County Blueprint and adopt a similar framework for an Infrastructure Master Plan for the disaster areas.

As these recovery efforts evolve, it is critical to clearly communicate the structure, role, and resources of any dedicated recovery team so survivors understand how to access support. Initially, survivors interacted with County support systems through the Disaster Recovery Centers. Currently, survivors interact with them through the One Stop Permitting Centers (One Stops). County Counsel's report back spoke to establishing unified structures that build on the current model of the One Stops to ensure that disaster recovery is survivor centric, easily accessible, and designed to provide dedicated resources for each community's recovery. It must be clear that the goal of this dedicated team is to help rebuild public infrastructure, support the recovery and rebuilding of private property, and to support survivors' needs in the aftermath of one of the worst disasters in LA County history.

**WE, THEREFORE, MOVE,** that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Direct the Acting Chief Executive Officer, in coordination with the Directors of Public Works and Regional Planning, the Fire Chief, and in consultation with County Counsel, to report back in writing within 7 days on the creation of a Disaster Recovery Rebuild Authority (Authority) within the Department of Public Works, including:

- a. A “day zero” plan that will allow the Authority to be launched immediately after the Board's adoption of the draft ordinance(s) referenced in Directive 2 (as applicable), including recommended functions, authorities, organizational chart, and staffing and resource needs. Initial startup functions should include, but not necessarily be limited to, implementation of public infrastructure rebuilding plans for Altadena and unincorporated Santa Monica Mountains (including Sunset Mesa) fire-impacted areas; public infrastructure delivery; proactive hazard mitigation; communications, community engagement, and community education; horizontal infrastructure and utility coordination; sewer; public water infrastructure; and other support functions, such as working with a builders’ alliance to reduce the cost of residential construction. Coordinating infrastructure rebuilding, including necessary logistics planning.
- b. Potential expansion phases if additional resources such as Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) or new State funding support become available, including additional functions, authorities, organizational growth, and additional staffing and resources

needs. Additional functions could include, but are not necessarily limited to, residential construction gap financing; rebuild navigators; material staging; and procurement/bulk purchasing.

- c. A comprehensive financial strategy to support the launch and operation of the Authority, including but not limited to use of Disaster EIFD funding and other available federal, state, and local funding.
2. Direct County Counsel, in coordination with the Acting Chief Executive Officer and the Director of Public Works, to report back to the Board in writing concurrently with the Acting CEO within 7 days with the draft ordinances (as applicable) for the Board's consideration, which will provide for the Authority to be established within Public Works and for the Director of Public Works to be the head of the Authority, including the necessary powers and duties that will be exercised by the Authority in carrying out its functions.
3. Direct the Acting Chief Executive Officer to report back in writing in 7 days with recommendations for a small team within CEO dedicated to disaster recovery that would focus on disaster financing, philanthropic and community partnerships, safety-net supports, and other related functions. The report should identify recommended staffing and resource needs, as well as available funding sources.
4. Direct the Director of Public Works to report back in writing quarterly on the development of the Infrastructure Master Plan.
5. Direct the Fire Chief and the Directors of Public Health, Public Works, and Regional Planning to report back within 7 days with recommendations for any additional staff, associated costs, and potential funding sources needed to support

the existing permitting team at the Calabasas One-Stop Permitting Center to support them in handling the increased workload experienced by the rebuilding effort in the fire impacted unincorporated Santa Monica Mountains, maximizing the existing expertise of the current County permitting team in relation to the topography and unique needs of our hillside and coastal communities.

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