

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS KATHRYN BARGER AND
LINDSEY P. HORVATH

MAY 19, 2026

**IMPLEMENTING THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY DISASTER RECOVERY REBUILD
AUTHORITY**

In January 2025, Los Angeles County experienced one of the most devastating disasters in its history, as the Eaton and Palisades Fires resulted in loss of life, destruction of homes and infrastructure, and long-term displacement of residents. In the immediate aftermath, the County mobilized rapidly to stabilize impacted communities, clear debris, restore access, and establish systems to support recovery.

As recovery has progressed, the County has made measurable strides, particularly through the establishment of the One-Stop Permitting Centers and Unified Permitting Authority (UPA), creating a more uniform, cross-departmental approach to permitting. These efforts have produced meaningful results, with more than 3,300 permit applications received more than 2,300 residential permits issued to date, and more than 1,200 homes already under construction in the Eaton Fire area alone. The County has also reduced internal processing timelines and provided more than \$17 million in fee deferrals and refunds to support residents rebuilding their homes.

These outcomes demonstrate that when the County operates in a coordinated and centralized manner, it can deliver results at scale and accelerate recovery.

However, while these improvements have been critical, they represent only one component of what is required to rebuild communities at the scale and speed this moment demands. Permitting alone will not deliver recovery. Full community recovery encompasses the entire spectrum of rebuilding—infrastructure, housing, economic revitalization, environmental rehabilitation, and the restoration of community life—and requires coordinated delivery, aligned timelines, sustained multi-year funding commensurate with the duration of the recovery, and a single entity responsible for leading the effort from start to finish.

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The urgency of standing up a Rebuild Authority is reinforced by the County's own forecasting. Modeling based on actual permit data and benchmarked against post-fire recovery from comparable disasters indicates that permit issuance and active construction in Altadena and the unincorporated Santa Monica Mountains will continue to climb over the next few years. The most resource-intensive phase of recovery—sustained construction activity, public infrastructure rebuilding, utility coordination, and inspections at scale—is still ahead of the County, not behind it. The Authority must be operational in advance of this wave, not in response to it. Standing up the Authority must therefore be paired with a sustained, multi-year funding commitment that matches the timeline of the recovery itself. Without it, the County risks under-resourcing the most demanding phase of the rebuild precisely when residents and infrastructure need the most support.

Recognizing this, on February 10, 2026, the Board of Supervisors directed the creation of a Disaster Recovery Rebuild Authority to bring together the County's efforts under a unified structure. Since that time, the Chief Executive Officer has reported back on the Authority's governance structure, staffing framework, and operational roles, and County Counsel has transmitted a draft ordinance amending the County Code to formally establish the Authority within the Department of Public Works and designate its powers and duties. With the planning and legal framework now in place, the County is prepared to move from planning to implementation.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Introduce, Waive Reading, and Set for Adoption the attached Ordinance No. _____ (adding Sections 2.18.090 through 2.18.097 to the County Code) to formally establish the Disaster Recovery Rebuild Authority as the County's comprehensive recovery and community rebuilding entity for the unincorporated areas impacted by the January 2025 Eaton and Palisades Fires, operationalized within the Department of Public Works, with the Director of Public Works serving as the head of the Authority and exercising the administrative authority necessary to oversee its programs, operations, and staff, consistent with the governance structure, staffing framework, and operational roles outlined in the Chief Executive Officer's reports back to the Board dated February 20, 2026, and March 6, 2026.
2. Direct the Director of Public Works, as head of the Disaster Recovery Rebuild Authority, in coordination with the Chief Executive Office, the Directors of Regional Planning and Public Health, the Fire Chief, County Counsel, the Chief Sustainability Officer, and other affected departments as appropriate to stand up the Disaster Recovery Rebuild Authority as the County's unified coordinating body for disaster recovery in the fire-impacted unincorporated areas, with responsibility for integrating and aligning the full spectrum of recovery functions across County departments. The Authority shall coordinate these functions without superseding the operational authorities of other County departments;

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3. Direct the Director of Public Works, as head of the Disaster Recovery Rebuild Authority (Authority), and in collaboration with the Chief Executive Office (CEO), to identify and secure the initial financial, staffing, and administrative support using existing resources to launch the “Day Zero” Initial Phase and sustain operations through the end of FY 2026-27, as described in the Chief Executive Office's reports back to the Board dated February 20, 2026, and March 6, 2026. Recognizing funding constraints, the Authority shall deliver on the identified set of high-priority functions outlined in the Report Backs upon implementation and prepare to scale in alignment with future funding availability. The Authority shall seek opportunities for State, Federal, or other funding sources for the rebuild and for its operations;
4. Direct the Chief Executive Office (CEO) to establish the CEO Disaster Recovery Oversight Team, as described in the CEO's reports back to the Board dated February 20, 2026, and March 6, 2026, in coordination with the Directors of Public Works, Regional Planning, and Public Health, the Fire Chief, County Counsel, the Chief Sustainability Officer, and other affected departments as appropriate, to maintain executive coordination of recovery efforts (including executive functions that are beyond the Rebuild Authority such as economic recovery activities led by the Department of Economic Opportunity), ensure collaboration across County departments, and provide overarching strategic guidance and a coordinated long-term recovery strategy. This may include convening representatives from affected departments to facilitate communication of major recovery project updates and resolution of critical strategic issues as needed;
5. Direct Public Works, in coordination with the Chief Executive Office, the Departments of Regional Planning, Public Health, Fire, County Counsel, and other affected departments, to report back to the Board in writing in 120 days and quarterly thereafter, on the Authority's operational progress, rebuilding metrics, interdepartmental coordination, resource utilization, funding, and any issues or barriers requiring Board action; and
6. The authorizations and delegated authorities provided for in the January 28, 2025 Revised Motion by Supervisors Kathryn Barger and Lindsey Horvath entitled LOS ANGELES COUNTY RECOVERY EFFORTS AND BUILDING URGENCY INTO IMPLEMENTATION OF LONG-TERM DISASTER SUPPORT shall remain in effect until repealed by the Board.

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ANALYSIS

This ordinance amends Title 2 – Administration – of the Los Angeles County Code, to:

- Establish the Los Angeles County Disaster Recovery Rebuild Authority (Rebuild Authority) within the Department of Public Works;
- Specify that the Director of Public Works is the head of the Rebuild Authority; and
- Designate the powers and duties of the Rebuild Authority.

Very truly yours,

DAWYN R. HARRISON
County Counsel

By 
MARGARET F. AMBROSE
Principal Deputy County Counsel
Public Works Division

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Requested: 02/11/26
Revised: 05/14/26

ORDINANCE NO. _____

An ordinance amending Title 2 – Administration – of the Los Angeles County Code, establishing the Los Angeles County Disaster Recovery Rebuild Authority (Rebuild Authority) within the Department of Public Works, specifying that the Director of Public Works is the head of the Rebuild Authority, and designating the powers and duties of the Rebuild Authority.

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles ordains as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 2.18.090 is hereby added to read as follows:

Section 2.18.090 Disaster Recovery Rebuild Authority

SECTION 2. Section 2.18.091 is hereby added to read as follows:

Section 2.18.091 Title

This Ordinance shall be known as the Disaster Recovery Rebuild Authority Ordinance.

SECTION 3. Section 2.18.092 is hereby added to read as follows:

Section 2.18.092 Purpose

In January 2025, Los Angeles County experienced one of the most devastating, deadly, and costly climate disasters in U.S. history encompassing the Eaton Fire and the Palisades Fire in which a total of 31 lives were lost, and more than 16,000 structures

were damaged or destroyed. In collaboration with federal, State, and municipal partners, Los Angeles County has led proactive efforts to respond to, recover from, and rebuild after, the disaster insofar as it impacted unincorporated areas within Altadena and the Santa Monica Mountains. As rebuilding continues to accelerate, tremendous challenges remain for community residents and local government. Recovery and rebuilding efforts require coordinated, timely, and technically informed action across multiple County departments and potentially other agencies. Therefore, to enhance ongoing recovery and rebuilding efforts related to the Eaton Fire and the Palisades Fire, the Board of Supervisors hereby creates the Disaster Recovery Rebuild Authority, as a unit within the Department of Public Works, to help rebuild public infrastructure, support the recovery and rebuilding of private property, and support community residents' needs in the aftermath of the Eaton Fire and the Palisades Fire, which collectively constitute one of the worst disasters in Los Angeles County history.

SECTION 4. Section 2.18.093 is hereby added to read as follows:

Section 2.18.093 Establishment

There is hereby created the Disaster Recovery Rebuild Authority ("Rebuild Authority") as a unit within the Department of Public Works to pursue recovery and rebuilding efforts related to the Eaton Fire and the Palisades Fire.

SECTION 5. Section 2.18.094 is hereby added to read as follows:

Section 2.18.094 Head of Rebuild Authority

The Director of Public Works is the head of the Rebuild Authority and, in that capacity, has administrative authority to implement and oversee the operations, programs, and staff assigned to the Rebuild Authority, in coordination with other involved County departments. The Director of Public Works may delegate duties as necessary and appropriate to carry out the Rebuild Authority's purposes and functions.

SECTION 6. Section 2.18.095 is hereby added to read as follows:

Section 2.18.095 Powers and Duties

Subject to and in accordance with applicable statutes, laws, policies, rules, restrictions, and limitations, with respect to fire-impacted properties located within applicable incorporated areas of the County that were affected by the Eaton Fire and the Palisades Fire, the Rebuild Authority shall have the power to:

- A. Plan, coordinate, and oversee rebuilding projects.
- B. Develop and enforce building standards and design guidelines that promote sustainability, energy efficiency, and resilience to fire, flood, and other hazards.
- C. Enter into contracts, memoranda of understanding, and other agreements with public agencies, private entities, and nonprofit organizations as necessary and appropriate to fulfill the Rebuild Authority's purposes and functions.

D. Apply for, receive, and administer grants, loans, and other funding sources, including charitable donations and gifts, for rebuilding efforts.

E. Acquire, lease, or dispose of property in furtherance of the Rebuild Authority's purposes and functions.

F. Coordinate with the Chief Executive Office, the Department of Regional Planning, the Fire Department, the Department of Public Health, other County Departments, and other agencies, and in consultation with County Counsel, as necessary and appropriate to carry out the Rebuild Authority's purposes and functions.

G. Engage in public outreach and stakeholder engagement to ensure community input in rebuilding plans.

SECTION 7. Section 2.18.096 is hereby added to read as follows:

Section 2.18.096 Sustainable and Resilient Rebuilding Standards

To the extent feasible, projects undertaken or approved by the Rebuild Authority shall incorporate:

- Fire-resistant materials and defensible space design.
- Renewable energy systems.
- Water conservation and drought-resilient landscaping.
- Infrastructure improvements to enhance evacuation routes and emergency access.

The Rebuild Authority shall periodically review and update these standards in consultation with experts and community stakeholders.

SECTION 8. Section 2.18.097 is hereby added to read as follows:

Section 2.18.097 Relationship to Existing Law

This Section shall not be construed to limit the emergency or other powers of the Board of Supervisors or to supersede the authority of other County departments.

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