

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS KATHRYN BARGER AND
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**ADDRESSING OVERGROWN VEGETATION AND FIRE RISK CONDITIONS IN
ALTADENA AND THE SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS**

The Eaton and Palisades Fires left widespread destruction throughout Altadena, and the Santa Monica Mountains, including thousands of damaged, vacant, and fire-impacted parcels now in varying stages of debris removal, rebuilding, insurance resolution, and recovery. In the months following the fires, overgrown vegetation and unmanaged brush conditions on burned residential properties have increasingly emerged across portions of the community, raising concerns regarding wildfire risk, vermin infestation, illegal dumping, impaired visibility, and broader neighborhood safety and quality-of-life impacts.

As Los Angeles County enters peak fire season, residents have expressed growing concern regarding residential properties where vegetation has become severely overgrown due to prolonged vacancy, stalled rebuilding timelines, ownership uncertainty, or financial hardship following the Eaton and Palisades Fires. While maintaining defensible space and reducing hazardous vegetation on residential properties remains critical to protecting public safety and ongoing rebuilding efforts, many impacted residents continue to face significant financial and logistical barriers as they navigate recovery.

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The County currently maintains authority to address hazardous vegetation and related nuisance conditions through existing code enforcement, weed abatement, and fire prevention programs. However, the unique recovery conditions facing Altadena and the Santa Monica Mountains warrant a more coordinated, compassionate, and solutions-oriented approach that prioritizes voluntary compliance, technical assistance and access to resources for residents, and proactive mitigation strategies before punitive enforcement measures are considered.

Neighboring jurisdictions and regional partners have also begun exploring innovative vegetation management approaches to reduce wildfire risk and improve landscape resiliency. For example, the City of Pasadena recently launched a targeted goat grazing initiative within the Arroyo Seco to clear invasive vegetation and reduce wildfire risk in steep and difficult-to-access terrain.

A coordinated interdepartmental strategy led by the Department of Public Works (Public Works), and the Rebuild Authority (RA) once the RA commences operations on July 1, 2026, in partnership with the Los Angeles County Agricultural Commissioner/Weights and Measures (AG) and the Fire Department (Fire), working in conjunction with community based organizations, is needed to address any hazardous vegetation conditions on residential property in Altadena and the unincorporated Santa Monica Mountains, including Sunset Mesa, while balancing public safety needs with the realities facing fire survivors and impacted property owners.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Direct the Director of the Department of Public Works in his capacity as the leader of Public Works and in his upcoming role as the Director of the Rebuild Authority (RA) when the RA commences operations on July 1, 2026, in coordination with the Los Angeles County Agricultural Commissioner/Weights and Measures (AG), Fire, Chief Sustainability Office (CSO) and other relevant departments, and in consultation with and coordinated with the Chief Executive Office (CEO) to ensure alignment with the overall recovery strategies to do the following:
 - a. Work with community based organizations to develop and implement a coordinated, environmentally sensitive strategy to address hazardous vegetation, brush clearance, and related nuisance conditions on fire-impacted, vacant, or stalled residential properties throughout Altadena and the unincorporated Santa Monica Mountains.

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- b. Direct Public Works, the RA, and AG to prioritize voluntary compliance, defensible space assistance, community outreach, and non-punitive mitigation efforts before pursuing financial penalties against fire-impacted property owners.
- c. Direct Public Works and, upon its commencement of operations on July 1, 2026, the RA, AG, CSO, and Fire to evaluate innovative vegetation management approaches utilized by neighboring jurisdictions, including targeted grazing, nature-based solutions, and other alternative vegetation reduction strategies, and assess the feasibility of pilot programs in Altadena and the Santa Monica Mountains.
- d. Direct Public Works and, upon its commencement of operations on July 1, 2026, the RA, in coordination with CEO, AG, Fire, and other relevant departments, to report back to the Board in writing within 30 days with:
 - i. Recommendations for immediate implementation actions and pilot vegetation mitigation programs;
 - ii. Any operational or legal barriers limiting proactive vegetation management efforts;
 - iii. Potential partnership and funding opportunities to support vegetation reduction efforts without placing additional financial burdens on residents; and
 - iv. Any additional authorities or policy changes needed to support long-term wildfire risk reduction and vegetation management efforts in Altadena and the unincorporated Santa Monica Mountains, including Sunset Mesa.