

Proclaiming September 2026 as Environmental Awareness Month

Los Angeles County (County) is home to a diverse and irreplaceable natural landscape, including coastal wetlands, mountain ranges, urban forests, and the Los Angeles River watershed, all of which sustain the health and well-being of over 10 million residents. The County has long been a leader in advancing sustainability, climate resilience, and environmental justice through initiatives such as OurCounty Sustainability Plan¹.

Environmental awareness and education empower residents, businesses, and communities to reduce waste, conserve natural resources, improve air and water quality, and mitigate the impacts of climate change. Historically underserved communities throughout Los Angeles County continue to bear a disproportionate burden of pollution, extreme heat, and environmental degradation underscoring the County's ongoing commitment to environmental justice and equitable access to clean air, water, and green spaces.

Over the last five years, the County has experienced numerous environmental issues:

¹ <https://ourcountyla.lacounty.gov/>

MOTION

MITCHELL	_____
HORVATH	_____
HAHN	_____
BARGER	_____
SOLIS	_____

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- The June 2026 Lineage Fire's thick, black smoke plumes reached from Downtown LA to the San Gabriel Valley, with East LA and Boyle Heights being the hardest hit. Eighty-five million pounds of foods were spoiled leading to hundreds of residents subjected to noxious and toxic fumes and ammonia leaks and infestation of rodents and flies.
- The May 2026 East LA Oil Spill, which caused about 25,000 gallons of crude oil pipeline to spill out oil into streets, storm drains, and the LA River. Residents reported headaches and trouble breathing as well as the need for immediate soil remediation work.
- The January 2025 Eaton and Palisades Fires, which was the single biggest environmental event, which killed 28 people, burned over 37,000 acres, and destroyed nearly 16,000 structures, exposing hundreds of thousands of residents to hazardous smoke and ash, as well as lead contamination spread far beyond burn zones.
- Chronic air pollution that disproportionately affects communities of color, since areas with more pollution tend to be less expensive and home to more low-income residents.
- Stormwater and urban runoff pollution continues to be a major issue with trash, pesticides, motor oil, and other contaminants washing into storm drains, which degrades rivers, creeks, and coastal waters and causing flooding with stormwater and urban runoff as the leading pollutant sources for the County's rivers, creeks, ocean, and beaches.
- Use of toxic chemicals and hazardous materials like methyl bromide, hydrogen

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fluoride, and modified hydrofluoric acid that continue to threaten workers and residents' health and safety and place them in harms' way.

- Habitat loss and biodiversity threats due to wildfire frequency across thousands of acres of wildlands, as well as land development and climate change continue to threaten 4,000 plant and animal species make the County a biodiversity hotspot.

In 2024, California Governor declared a state of emergency when the Greater Portuguese Bend Landslide, a decades-long, slow moving landslide accelerated after the 2022 and 2023 winter storms, which residents in Palos Verdes Peninsula saw land movement of up to one foot per week in some areas. Homes were ripped away and apart leaving swaths of unusable open space due to chasms up to 20 feet deep and 12 feet wide.

Even further back, we have one of the most significant and longest-running environmental justice issues in the County, the former Exide Technologies plant in the City of Vernon. From 1922 to 2015, it processed 11 million auto batteries a year, which released an estimated 3,500 tons of lead into the surrounding communities of Maywood, East LA, Commerce, Bell, and Huntington Park. The soil is contaminated with lead, arsenic, cadmium, and other tox metals, with contamination reaching from near-surface soil down to groundwater aquifer, which the exposure raises the risk of cancer, breathing diseases, and learning problems for the more than 100,000 residents who live and work.

The County recognizes that a healthy environment is foundational to public health, economic vitality, and quality of life for all who call this County home. The County will remain committed to doing all it can to ensure residents have access to clean air, water,

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and land.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors proclaim September 2026 as Environmental Awareness Month.

I, FURTHER, MOVE, that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Sustainability Office and other relevant County Departments to work with local schools, nonprofit organizations, and businesses to engage residents year-round in habit restoration, tree planting, recycling programs, and clean energy initiatives and provide resources that will protect our shared environment for current and future generations.

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