

Communication from Public

Name: Tujunga resident

Date Submitted: 09/17/2025 12:09 PM

Council File No: 10-2468-S2

Comments for Public Posting: Please take note that any statistical analysis of potential tree loss or other impacts thus far in the City of Los Angeles has not even included the Sunland Tujunga community (CD7). Therefore, the potential impacts will be in fact much worse than what has been estimated or contemplated thus far. Sunland Tujunga is a foothill community annexed to Los Angeles approximately 100 years ago. This community has interfaces to both the Verdugo Mountains and the San Gabriel Mountains, major watersheds (which was historically why Los Angeles wanted it annexed). In addition, the County of Los Angeles long ago designated the Verdugo Mountains area a Sensitive Ecological Area. While that is a County policy, not a City policy, it doesn't change the fact that this is among the most biologically diverse and sensitive areas that remain in Los Angeles. The State's proposed implementation of the zero zone legislation is so insufficient and lacking in scientific and real world data, with such conflicting guidance and unclear definitions, it cannot be reasonably relied upon. The only reasonable course of action is to continue to have local context-specific and science based standards that achieve the original overall goal of minimizing ignition in the zero zone. That doesn't need to be and shouldn't be practices that are in direct conflict with the protection of the environment overall and the California Endangered Species Act. There are plenty of plants that can exist in the ground both in the zero zone as well as other zones that do not necessarily increase the ignition risks from embers and, in fact, may decrease it. This "scorched earth" guidance proposal at the State level will be just that and the numerous other associated problems will be so much more difficult to solve than merely encouraging appropriate green space. This is California, one of the world's Biodiversity hot spots, consisting of numerous and diverse ecological systems, even within the City of Los Angeles itself, let alone the state at large. We don't just have a desert here, we have coastal/marine, chaparral, coastal sage scrub, Oak woodlands, and many transitional ecotone areas. California and Los Angeles are within the Pacific Flyway, a crucial route for migratory birds. The continued arbitrary destruction of habitat means birds and other pollinators will suffer even more serious decline, robbed of resting and foraging spots along their route, with more and more

fragmentation. California native plants provide critical food such as berries and insects. The suburban gardens are every bit as important as the remote large swaths of land in terms of the survival of birds. In fact, as development and density continues to encroach into the little remaining areas of the natural world, the small suburban gardens are even more important, not less important. As long-time residents of Tujunga, we have observed many decades of bird migration through the edges of the Verdugo mountains here and the Yellow Warbler, a species of special concern in California, is routinely observed utilizing the Oaks, as well as a lengthy list of other species. We are currently now in the height of fall migration and are already observing the birds stopping in to our native plant garden along their way. I can look back on my Merlin app and see my sound recording of the Yellow Warbler on August 28, 2025 that I did when I last saw one in one of our Oak trees. It's not just birds, other pollinators such as butterflies will also suffer serious decline and many are already on the brink of extinction. Part of the ecology that makes the world go round includes things like the lowly dead leaf litter which doesn't get the respect it deserves. Granted, excessive leaf litter should never be permitted to build up, especially around flammable structures and flammable vegetation. However, without at least a minimal leaf litter, the insect food sources will be gone and the soil health will be diminished to the point of losing more and more associated nearby trees and shrubs, or requiring more irrigation to just keep them alive and from becoming a greater fire risk than they ever would have been as part of a well managed plant community. Do we really believe that just a few leaves on the ground a few feet away from structures is really going to constitute an extreme risk for ignition? The Oak leaf litter is particularly important for the health of the Oaks and associated plants. We really cannot have succulent or semi-succulent plants within 5 ft of structure? I get that perhaps a prickly cacti is not safe for fire fighters or others when it's that close to a house, but a fleshy succulent or small herbaceous perennials. It's all about vegetation management and land stewardship and it can be done without destroying everything. It can be done with some rational fine tuning at the local level.