

# MOTION

# PUBLIC SAFETY

The Department of General Services (GSD) Fleet Services Division is responsible for maintaining the helicopter fleets of the Police Department (LAPD), Fire Department (LAFD), and Department of Water and Power (LADWP). Recent reports indicate that GSD is currently unable to meet the routine maintenance requirements of the Fire Department's fleet of six helicopters. In recent weeks, at least three of the LAFD's six helicopters have remained grounded and unavailable for duty due to an ongoing maintenance backlog. The LAFD relies on all six helicopters on a daily basis for critical missions including air ambulance transport, reaching lost and injured hikers, swift water rescue operations, aerial reconnaissance, high-rise firefighting, and dropping water on brush fires.

This past Sunday, brush fires broke out in Sylmar and Mandeville Canyon within 90 minutes of each other, and both incidents required the utilization of LAFD's water dropping helicopters. Due to 50% of the LAFD helicopter fleet out of service, the Fire Department was precluded from supporting both incidents simultaneously. In addition, while firefighters valiantly controlled both fires without the loss of any homes, the reduction in the number of helicopters not only extended the turnaround time for refilling helicopter water tanks and dropping water, but also limited the LAFD's ability to fulfill precision drop requests from firefighters on the ground during the initial stages of the Mandeville fire. While an L.A. County Fire Department helicopter assisted the City this past Sunday, the standing mutual aid agreement is designed to supplement, not supplant the full complement of LAFD helicopters.

It is imperative that action be taken to immediately reduce the current helicopter fleet maintenance backlog. Helicopters are inherently labor intensive and must be taken out of service according to prescribed maintenance intervals in order to remain flightworthy. These maintenance burdens increase as aircraft acquire more flight hours. In order to address this backlog, GSD must be provided with the funding, personnel, and overtime authority necessary to fulfill the current maintenance needs of all the City's current and newly acquired helicopters.


While Southern California now experiences a year-round brush season, the next several months leading into the peak fire season in October are anticipated to be particularly volatile and potentially devastating due to increased vegetation growth from the recent rains. It is therefore imperative that the Fire Department's helicopter fleet be maintained at full strength, with minimal downtime. The LAFD must also be able to fulfill its own outside mutual aid commitments, without compromising the level of service within the City.


**I THEREFORE MOVE** to instruct the Department of General Services, in consultation with the Fire Department, to report to the City Council within 14 days on the current state of LAFD helicopter fleet, and provide a detailed written report that includes the following elements:

- Current maintenance, repair, and completion workload generated by the City's entire helicopter fleet, as compared to available hours provided by the current GSD helicopter maintenance labor force.
- Current status of all filled and unfilled GSD helicopter maintenance positions, and how many additional full-time positions and/or overtime hours are required to address present day and anticipated workloads in the near future.
- Current out of service status and maintenance backlog for the LAFD's helicopter fleet, and exactly how long these helicopters have been out of service.
- Current out of service status and maintenance backlog for the LAPD and LADWP helicopter fleets, and how they compare to LAFD.
- Additional maintenance burden created by the LAPD's recent acquisition of a retired Bell 412 medium lift helicopter from LAFD, and whether or not it feasible to maintain this additional aircraft, in light of the status of the existing fleet.

**I FURTHER MOVE** that GSD report to Council on the most immediate needs to address the helicopter maintenance backlog, along with the longer term positions authorities and funding necessary to maintain the stability of the LAFD helicopter fleet.

PRESENTED BY:

  
MIKE BONIN  
Councilmember, 11<sup>th</sup> District

  
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Councilmember, 12<sup>th</sup> District

SECONDED BY:



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