

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE REPORT relative to brush clearance violations and delinquent cases in connection with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) parcels located within the City's Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSV).

Recommendation for Council action, pursuant to Motion (Rodriguez - Blumenfield):

DIRECT the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) to:

- a. Report with detail regarding Caltrans parcels located within the City's Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones to include:
  - i. The number of brush clearance violations
  - ii. The number of delinquent cases associated with Caltrans in the last three years and any outstanding costs owed to the City.
- b. Report on the number of fires the LAFD has responded to on Caltrans property in the last three years.

Fiscal Impact Statement: None submitted. Neither the City Administrative Officer nor the Chief Legislative Analyst has completed a financial analysis of this report.

Community Impact Statement: None submitted.

Summary:

On October 27, 2020, your Committee considered a Motion (Rodriguez - Blumenfield) relative to brush clearance violations and delinquent cases in connection with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) parcels located within the City's Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. According to the Motion, in the early hours of October 3, 2020, the LAFD responded to a brush fire in Mission Hills abutting the 118 Freeway along Caltrans property. As a result of this fire, the number 3, 4 and 5 lanes of the eastbound Ronald Reagan (SR-118) Freeway at the Golden State (1-5) Freeway were closed for an extended period of time. Fortunately, firefighters were able to contain the 1.5 acre brush fire and halt the threat to the neighboring communities within 40 minutes. This recent scenario is not unique as the City has responded to countless fires along the Caltrans right-of-way.

Brush fires continue to be a threat to life and property in the City, especially within the VHFHSZ.

Over the years, the City has implemented increased requirements for brush clearance and fire safety in the VHFHSZ to safeguard the public from fire risks. Owners of property located in the VHFHSZ, which includes public agencies, are required to maintain their property in accordance with the Fire Code. Historically, Caltrans has neglected to perform the required brush clearance and maintenance along their right-of-way within the City. In a recent conversation with Council District Seven, Caltrans staff stated that fire risks outside of the physical freeway structure do not constitute an immediate "Level 1" danger per their policy. This position and inaction fails to consider the tremendous risk factors for the surrounding community. As such, the City is forced to complete the fire mitigation work, which comes at a cost to the City. After consideration and

having provided an opportunity for public comment, the Committee moved to recommend approval of the Motion. This matter is now submitted to Council for its consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

<u>MEMBER</u>	<u>VOTE</u>
RODRIGUEZ:	YES
O'FARRELL:	YES
BUSCAINO:	ABSENT
RYU:	YES
LEE:	YES

ARL  
10/27/20

**-NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL COUNCIL ACTS-**