

Communication from Public

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Comments for Public Posting: Please see attached.

I am a 50 year resident of San Pedro. I graduated from CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) Basic in 2018, and was sworn in to the CERT call out team in 2022, and appointed CERT Battalion 6 coordinator in 2024. I am also a member of the Coastal San Pedro Neighborhood Council's Emergency Preparation and Public Safety Committee, and a coordinator for Alma Park Neighbors, a neighborhood group covering 52 blocks in San Pedro.

It's common knowledge that Los Angeles is at risk to a major earthquake, as well as other natural and manmade disasters. In the Harbor, our residents face potential dangers from a tsunami after an earthquake or a refinery accident. If and when something happens here, we may not be able to leave, and it may be difficult for help to get to us, since there are so few ways in and out.

I had known most of my life that when "The Big One" hits, our first responders will be overwhelmed, and we shouldn't count on calling 911 to get help. I often wondered what we civilians were expected to do instead. I got the answer to that when I took the CERT Basic class. I learned how to safely check on my family and neighbors, how to triage and perform critical first aid, along with other important skills. After I completed the class, I began participating in the drills regularly held throughout the city, so I could put what I'd learned into practice. One thought I've had at every drill, no matter how many people showed up, is that we could really use more trained people.

As a member of the call out team, and now as a coordinator, I've done a lot of outreach, introducing CERT and what we do, and encouraging people to take the class. Once people learn that the classes are taught by firefighters from the Los Angeles Fire Department, they start listening harder. We emphasize that the classes are free, that's it's okay if you can't run a marathon and have never touched a radio; whether you're a doctor or a construction worker living in a van, we have a place for you. We tell them there are classes happening throughout the city; that they can take the class where and when it's convenient for them, and in fact, we will do our best to bring the class to you.

When I heard that there are plans to cut back the CERT program, and possibly eliminate 6 of our 8 instructors, my heart dropped. Cutting the instructors would drastically impede the availability of classes. Here in the Harbor area, it's not exactly easy to get to a class in the Valley, and sometimes not even to Downtown. We need to be able to have classes here, where people can and will travel to them. We also need the classes scheduled regularly, so if the next class coming up happens while someone's out of town, they know they will have another opportunity to get trained, sooner rather than later. We need our instructors.

Beyond the CERT Basic training, our instructors also support and train the call out team. The call out team - who all come from CERT Basic graduates, by the way - actively support our firefighters and community every day, and many of our duties directly help keep firefighters available to help members of the public. A pair of call out team members can maintain a perimeter around a downed wire, freeing an entire LAFD apparatus and its crew to respond to other calls. A single member of the call out team can provide security for a fire station with a

broken door or no power, which means the station doesn't have to hold back an apparatus and its crew.

It's easy to dismiss emergency preparedness and response as something that can be dealt with in the future. We don't know when we'll be hit with a major disaster, but it will happen, and then it will be too late to train the citizens of Los Angeles how to deal with it. That disaster may be an earthquake, it may be a wildfire, landslide, or terrorist attack. They need to be trained now, and the LAFD CERT instructors are crucial to making that happen. I ask that you reconsider any plans to lower the number of CERT instructors for our city.

Thank you.

Annalisa Little