

Communication from Public

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Council File No: 25-0002-S17

Comments for Public Posting: In the attached letter, the Theodore Payne Foundation registers its opposition to CF 25-0002 SF17. We lend our support to arguments made by Lisa Hart at LA NCSA and Travis Longcore at UCLA that the appropriate distance for defensible space around a home in an urban environment is 100 ft, not 700 ft.



THEODORE PAYNE FOUNDATION
for Wild Flowers & Native Plants

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Dear Los Angeles City Council,

We are writing to oppose resolution CF 25-0002 SF17. We have been made aware of an excellent letter sent to you from Lisa Hart, Executive Director of Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Sustainability Alliance; we believe her letter summarizes perfectly the dangers and unintended consequences that will result from adopting the vegetation management policies proposed in that resolution.

We understand the pressure to adopt policies that will protect residents from fire, but CF 25-0002 SF17 will not achieve your goal. It will, instead, promote the spread of flammable invasive weeds, reduce cooling tree canopy, and remove the exact landscaping that can protect a home from fire by trapping and sequestering embers. It would also have devastating effects on local habitat and ecology.

Like Ms. Hart, we too believe that any new resolutions should align with California law AB 3074. The 100 feet of defensible space recommended therein already includes a conservative extension beyond the recommendations from a study that showed mitigation beyond 75 feet is not effective to increase a home's wildfire safety (Syphard and Keely, 2019). To our understanding, the 700-foot clearing recommended in CF 25-0002 SF17 has no basis in science and would create significant harm to residents. See also an article by Travis Longcore (<https://travislongcore.net/2025/04/20/los-angeles-does-not-need-700-feet-of-defensible-space/>) for an in-depth analysis of this issue.

Please instead support measures that help residents use landscaping for their benefit and protection, especially those that include native vegetation which can supply other habitat and ecological benefits. We are happy to provide additional guidance and counsel at any time.

Sincerely,

Amy Greenwood, Executive Director, on behalf of
Theodore Payne Foundation for Wild Flowers and Native Plants
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