

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Peter Halm  
**Date Submitted:** 01/07/2025 04:22 PM  
**Council File No:** 25-0006-S41  
**Comments for Public Posting:** See below attachment

Date: January 7, 2025

Los Angeles Board of Fire Commissioners  
200 N. Main Street, Suite 1800  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**Re: BFC 24-117 - LAFD CERT V-Hours Staffing Reductions**

Dear Honorable Members of the Fire Commission,

My name is Peter Halm, and I am a proud volunteer with the LAFD's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). I'm reaching out personally to share my concerns about the potential reduction of CERT Unit sworn staff overtime variable staffing hours (V-hours) mentioned in BFC 24-117. As someone deeply committed to supporting my city and the LAFD, I believe any reduction could have far-reaching consequences for our community's safety and preparedness.

Emergencies are unpredictable. Whether it's a wildfire, an earthquake, or a sudden disaster, we never know when or where the next crisis will strike. That's why it's so important to have as many people as possible trained and ready to respond. The CERT program plays a key role in making sure Los Angeles is prepared for the unexpected.

Through the CERT program, everyday people like me are trained to step up during emergencies, providing vital support to both their communities and the LAFD. But this training and coordination depend heavily on our CERT Firefighter Instructors, who ensure we're not just willing to help, but able to do so safely and effectively.

Here are just a few ways I've seen CERT volunteers make a difference:

- **Incident Support:** During major incidents, CERT volunteers help with firefighter hydration, rehabilitation, logistical support, and managing other critical tasks. This allows LAFD personnel to stay focused on saving lives and managing emergencies.
- **Cost Savings:** The work CERT volunteers do saves the city both time and money. Without our support, the LAFD might need to allocate additional paid resources for tasks we handle voluntarily.
- **Community Preparedness:** Our Firefighter Instructors train members of the community to respond effectively in emergencies, creating a ripple effect of readiness across neighborhoods. Every trained volunteer becomes a resource during a crisis.

Reducing V-hours doesn't just affect training and coordination; it impacts the city's ability to respond swiftly and effectively when disaster strikes. Emergencies don't wait for budgets to align—and we can't afford to wait until it's too late to realize how critical CERT is.

I respectfully urge you to carefully consider the potential impact of reducing V-hours and to continue supporting the CERT program and its instructors. A prepared community is a safer community, and together, we can keep Los Angeles ready for whatever comes our way.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Peter Halm  
LAFD CERT Volunteer

peterhalm@mac.com

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Robert Portillo

**Date Submitted:** 01/08/2025 08:51 PM

**Council File No:** 25-0006-S41

**Comments for Public Posting:** January 8, 2025 Los Angeles City Council Council File Board of Fire Commission Number: BFC 24-117 – continue CERT operations Dear Los Angeles City Council, Beginning in 1985 with the Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAFD), the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program is a community volunteer organization that already makes a difference. Since CERT's inception it has grown into a nation wide organization, augmenting the LAFD's needs through it's basic disaster response skills, such as: Emergency and Earthquake Preparedness Fire Safety Light search and rescue Crowd control Medical skills, triage, and disaster operations LAFD Instructors are full time, cutting back instructors to two instructors' is not enough since community enrollment is so high. The city has the ability to keep programs open, CERT should be on that list. In light of the recent fires engulfing Los Angeles, the call to cutback LAFD funding and the programs it supports is short-sighted and a blatant disregard for community safety, and the agencies designed to protect us. SAVE THE LAFD AND SAVE CERT! Sincerely, Robert Portillo (Mid City Area Team Leader) 4527 W. 16th Place Los Angeles, CA 90019 CERT 68-Sixteenth-1

January 8, 2025

Los Angeles City Council

Council File

Board of Fire Commission Number: BFC 24-117 – continue CERT operations

Dear Los Angeles City Council,

Beginning in 1985 with the Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAFD), the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program is a community volunteer organization that already makes a difference.

Since CERT's inception it has grown into a nation wide organization, augmenting the LAFD's needs through it's basic disaster response skills, such as:

Emergency and Earthquake Preparedness  
Fire Safety  
Light search and rescue  
Crowd control  
Medical skills, triage, and disaster operations

LAFD Instructors are full time, cutting back instructors to two instructors' is not enough since community enrollment is so high.

The city has the ability to keep programs open, CERT should be on that list. In light of the recent fires engulfing Los Angeles, the call to cutback LAFD funding and the programs it supports is short-sighted and a blatant disregard for community safety, and the agencies designed to protect us.

**SAVE THE LAFD AND SAVE CERT!**

Sincerely,  
Robert Portillo (Mid City Area Team Leader)  
4527 W. 16<sup>th</sup> Place  
Los Angeles, CA 90019

CERT 68-Sixteenth-1

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Raquel Borden

**Date Submitted:** 01/17/2025 12:40 PM

**Council File No:** 25-0006-S41

**Comments for Public Posting:** RE: BFC 24-117 - Continue CERT Operations and restore budget to LAFD. The staff of the Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) Unit should not be reduced. The recent fires have highlighted the need to not just continue, but expand CERT so more communities are prepared for when all sorts of emergencies arise at the home, community or citywide. The CERT teams are made up of volunteers certified to assist the LAFD with various tasks; thus allowing the firefighter and paramedics deal with critical situations during major disasters, because we know that when other cities are impacted by disasters at the same time, mutual aid is spread thin. Also, with the Olympics coming up, the LAFD needs a robust uniformed and civilian staff as well as working equipment as well as a CERT Teams to be properly trained and prepared to deal with any situations that may arise during Olympics and other emergencies. Let's not be short-sighted. Invest in a department that safes lives. The Pantheon- Sorbonne University in Paris funded a study about CERT and how it has been befitted many countries around the world.