

MOTION

Frequent rubbish and vegetation fires within the California Department of Transportation's (Caltrans) right-of-way have become a sustained and serious issue in the City of Los Angeles, with recurring incidents occurring in restricted, confined infrastructure and freeway-adjacent areas that are not intended for public access. These events present an immediate risk to public safety, critical infrastructure, and surrounding communities, while placing a growing fiscal burden on the City of Los Angeles. The Los Angeles Fire Department is repeatedly required to respond to fires within State-controlled right-of-way areas, diverting limited emergency resources, driving overtime costs, and further straining already impacted public safety services.

The latest incident, a fire within an access portal directly under the Interstate 110 in the Wilmington and San Pedro area, prompted a complete freeway closure and brought a range of concerns into sharp focus, from potential structural compromise to traffic management challenges, as well as the coordination and delivery of timely public safety notifications. This event highlights the urgency of the issue and the City's growing exposure to financial liability and service disruptions resulting from Caltrans' failure to adequately secure, monitor, and maintain its assets.

As reflected in Council File 26-0674, the City has acted diligently to coordinate across agencies and respond to emerging safety risks, even where jurisdiction lies with Caltrans and other entities. However, the frequency of these incidents and the mounting cost to City resources necessitate a focused evaluation of cost recovery options and a clearer accounting of the scale of emergency responses occurring within Caltrans' right-of-way.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council direct the City Administrative Officer (CAO) and the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD), and any other relevant departments, in coordination with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), to report with an analysis on the total number and frequency of LAFD responses to rubbish and vegetation fires over the past three years and the current Fiscal Year 2025-2026, and the number and percentage of those fires that occur within the Caltrans right-of-way.

I FURTHER MOVE that the City Council direct the CAO and the Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA), in coordination with the Office of the City Attorney and LAFD, to report on:

- The estimated costs associated for the City with these Caltrans right-of-way responses, including personnel costs for the last three years and the current Fiscal Year 2025-2026;
- The feasibility, legal authority, and process required for the City to seek reimbursement or cost recovery from CAL FIRE, Caltrans, or other responsible State entity; and

- Any existing agreements, policies, or precedents related to interagency cost-sharing or reimbursement for fire response services in State-controlled infrastructure areas, and whether these frameworks can be revisited or renegotiated to achieve cost savings.

I FURTHER MOVE that the City Council request that Caltrans report on whether it maintains or participates in encampment resolution programs within its right-of-way, including coordination with local jurisdictions. This report should detail current policies, protocols, and resources dedicated to services, shelter, housing, and the success or failure of such efforts.

PRESENTED BY: _____


TIM McOSKER

Councilmember, 15th District

SECONDED BY: _____



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