

Communication from Public

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Comments for Public Posting: I enter this comment as an individual. I am a former Neighborhood Council President, Vice-President, Outreach Chair and current BONC Commissioner. I highly recommend the CERT training be voluntary at the discretion of an individual board member and their doctor. Neighborhood Council board members are unpaid volunteers serving as advisors to City Hall and advocates for matters in their community on an administrative and non-hazardous capacity. The Los Angeles City Charter Article IX Section 900 identifies Neighborhood Councils role as an "Advisory Role." While some Neighborhood Council board members are medical professionals, first responders, or active or retired military service people, most are not. At the time of a catastrophic event, first responders advise residents to stay off the roads unless a catastrophic event mandates mandatory evacuation. We recently were notified the City of Los Angeles requires Neighborhood Councils to obtain insurance for events outside of meetings. Catastrophic events can involve exposure to hazardous or dangerous environments. Unpaid volunteers should not be required to jeopardize their health and lives. This is the responsibility of experienced and paid first responders and medical professionals. While everyone is empathetic to the hazardous Boyle Heights disaster, exposure to such a hazardous environment should be an individual choice subject to approval by one's doctor and medical insurance. Additionally, some such exposures may be excluded by health insurance and subrogated to the City of Los Angeles. Neighborhood Council board members are required to take 5 hours of training as new board members and 2 1/2 hours of continuing education every other year. They volunteer countless hours physically, emotionally and financially. Many balance health challenges, careers, families, and caregiving. Many Neighborhood Councils have struggled to make quorum due to loss of board members and inability to recruit new board members due to lack of interest. This lack of interest is due to the limited time, amount of required training and operational matters that impede their service. An added 3 hour-8 week training will likely result in the loss of valuable and experienced Neighborhood Council board members.