

PUBLIC WORKS

PUBLIC SAFETY

MOTION

“El Niño” is a cyclical weather pattern, driven by warmer ocean water temperatures, that often leads to wetter winters and increased chances of flooding in Southern California.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicts there is a greater than 90% chance of a very strong or “super” El Niño event in the Northern Hemisphere in 2026-27, including California. Recent powerful El Niños in Los Angeles include 2015-16 and, most notably, 1997-98, when storms caused millions of dollars in property and infrastructure damage across California. In Los Angeles, El Niño’s impact included multiple fatalities, mud flows and debris flows as well as collapsed hillsides in Westlake and Canoga Park, which led to hundreds of evacuations.

A strong El Niño elevates the risk of coastal and urban flooding, erosion of coastal bluffs, damage to fishing piers as well as debris flows in recent burn scars where topsoil repels water. The City’s Hazard Mitigation Plan, adopted in 2024, identifies many of these risks, in addition to vulnerable areas of the City.

The City’s *Emergency Operations Plan* and supporting annexes outline actions that City departments should undertake in the event of imminent hazards such as the urban and coastal flooding and mud and debris flows that could result from a super El Niño.

Given its high probability, residents should understand the preparations the City is undertaking to mitigate these risks while protecting human life and property.

I THEREFORE MOVE that Council instruct the Emergency Management Department, in coordination with the Bureau of Engineering, Bureau of Sanitation, Department of Recreation and Parks, Department of Water and Power, Police Department, and Fire Department, to present at the next Ad Hoc Committee for LA Recovery on their preparations for the super El Niño predicted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, including but not limited to:

- Preparations to fortify low-lying coastal areas against storm surges and flooding, including the City’s fishing piers;
- Emergency notifications, evacuation planning and provision of temporary shelter;
- Measures to clear catch-basins, debris basins and storm drains to prevent obstructions and create additional capacity for debris and water flow;
- Efforts to stabilize hillsides and protect roadways against mud and debris flows in the Palisades burn scar. The presentation should also address other hillside areas at increased risk for mud and debris flows;
- Tactics to address and manage overgrown vegetation in Fire Hazard Severity Zones as a result of a wetter winter.

PRESENTED BY:



TRACI PARK

Councilwoman, 11th District

SECONDED BY:




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