



MIKE BONIN

City of Los Angeles
Councilmember, Eleventh District

Tuesday, February 9, 2021

Mr. Vince Bertoni
Director of Planning
Los Angeles City Planning
200 North Spring Street, 5th Floor
Los Angeles, California 90012
Mail Stop 395

Dear Mr. Bertoni,

I am writing today to request a wildfire study in the Housing Element 2021-2029 and Safety Element Updates' Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) due to my concern on the potential to increase our City's vulnerability to natural disasters in our Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ).

On January 26 and 28, the Department of City Planning hosted two Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Scoping meetings on the potential environmental impacts of the Housing and Safety Element Updates. The initial study proposed that the following issue areas have no impact, or a less than significant impact: Agriculture and Forestry Resources, Energy, Mineral Resources, and Wildfire.

Wildfires, in particular, are of great concern to me and a significant threat to the life and property of my constituents. The Los Angeles region alone has experienced an average of 5 fires per year over the past several decades. Our District has been no stranger to wildfires as they have threatened residents in the region over the years:

- Erbes Fire - 250 acres in January, 2021
- Getty Fire - 745 acres in October, 2019
- Palisades Fire - 42 acres in October, 2019
- Wendy Fire - 91 acres in October, 2019
- Portola Fire - 20 acres in June, 2018
- Woolsey Fire - 96,949 acres in November, 2018
- Peak Fire - 186 acres in November, 2018
- Topanga Fire - 55 acres in June, 2017
- Stokes Fire - 41 acres in June, 2017
- Skirball Fire - 422 acres in December, 2017
- Potrero Fire - 50 acres in November, 2015

A contributing factor to wildfire vulnerability is development that encroaches into our District's Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) that creates a cumulative impact on our native vegetation, habitats, slope stability, scenic viewsheds, and watersheds to name a few. Continued expansion into the City's WUI should be analyzed to assess the appropriate land use policy and building codes required in these communities to mitigate potential wildfire risk.

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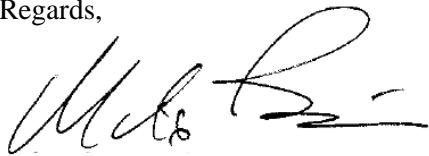
In particular, the CEQA analysis should consider how our hillside communities face far greater exposure to wildfires due to factors such as slope, prevailing winds, and vegetative fuel. Secondary impacts of wildfires that threaten these communities include the increased risk of debris flows, landslides, and flooding due to post-fire runoff, slope instability, or impaired drainage. Development in these areas may exacerbate wildfire conditions through extensive excavation, grading, and habitat destruction.

A CEQA analysis of wildfire should address the potential impacts development has on the community and environment in the VHFHSZ - particularly in hillside communities characterized by substandard infrastructure that may increase the vulnerability of residents and property to significant hazards, and impede emergency response and evacuation.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and your consideration of this request. I am looking forward to reviewing the DEIR with a wildfire study when it becomes available to the public in late Spring of 2021, and working together to develop strategies in the Housing and Safety Element Updates to balance our housing needs with the City's goal to improve community resilience and recovery.

For further questions, please contact my Senior Planning Deputy, Jason P. Douglas at (213) 473-7011 or jason.p.douglas@lacity.org.

Regards,



MIKE BONIN
Councilmember, 11th District

cc: Kevin Keller, Los Angeles City Planning
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