



PACIFIC PALISADES COMMUNITY COUNCIL
PACIFIC PALISADES RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

December 15, 2025

The Hon. John Harabedian, Chair
The Hon. John Laird, Vice-Chair
Joint Legislative Audit Committee
California State Capitol
1021 O Street, Suite 4350
Sacramento, CA 95814-4900

Via email to all addressees

**Re: Los Angeles Fires – Prevention and Response (Assembly Member Harabedian)
California State Auditor Request No. 2025-114**

Dear Assembly Member Harabedian and Senator Laird:

We represent, respectively, Pacific Palisades Community Council and Pacific Palisades Residents Association, two of the oldest civic organizations dedicated to advocating on behalf of over 25,000 Palisadians. In the wake of the January 7, 2025, Palisades Fire, our mission is to help rebuild a fire resilient community. That cannot happen unless (to quote Assembly Member Harabedian) we “build on what worked and fix what failed.”

Thank you for your leadership in initiating the audit by the State Auditor on the prevention and response efforts to the Eaton and Palisades Fires. This audit can be a signal event in ensuring transparency and accountability from our state and local officials and hopefully will pave the way for critically needed federal disaster supplemental appropriations. We also commend the Joint Legislative Audit Committee (“JLAC”) for refocusing public attention on the State Auditor’s December 2019 Report, “California Is Not Adequately Prepared to Protect Its Most Vulnerable Residents From Natural Disasters.” That report was a stark, unambiguous, and largely unheeded warning about critical failures in protecting our most vulnerable residents from wildfires. As the Chair is so painfully aware, 30 of our neighbors lost their lives in the Eaton and Palisades Fires. Many of those who perished were elderly and/or had mobility or communications issues which impeded their ability to escape the fires. We agree with Assembly Member Harabedian: our neighbors and their families “deserve the truth about what happened,” so we may “ensure that our neighborhoods are never left vulnerable again.”

As you are aware, the United States Senate Select Committee on Aging shares the JLAC’s concerns about the failure to adequately protect our elderly residents. Last week, the Chairman of that Committee, Senator Rick Scott (R-Fla.), called on Governor Newsom “to publicly share exactly how the state has used the billions in tax dollars it has already received over the past decade that were intended for wildfire preparedness and recovery.” At the time he made this request, Senator Scott stated that “all taxpayers, including those directly impacted by the January 7 fires, deserve answers before California receives more of Americans’ hard-earned tax money.”

Our organizations are also interested in obtaining answers to these questions. A comprehensive examination as to how California disbursed federal fire preparedness and hazard mitigation appropriations will better inform our public officials where funding may be more effectively deployed. It may also be critical to when and how Congress responds to Governor Newsom's request for over \$35 billion in disaster recovery and rebuilding funding for the Altadena and Palisades Fires.

The scope and objectives of the State Auditor's investigation into the Los Angeles fires include "evaluat[ing] the adequacy of emergency plans," "whether adequate resources were available and effectively used," "whether adequate water resources were available, including firefighting infrastructure," as well as the "adequacy of any brush clearing." While these topics may touch upon the funding of Los Angeles' wildfire planning and preparedness, any understanding of the City's or the County's responses would be incomplete unless it also examines whether that funding was used for its intended purposes, and whether it was spent wisely.

Accordingly, Pacific Palisades Community Council and Pacific Palisades Residents Association respectfully request that JLAC amend the scope of its audit request to the State Auditor to include an examination of how the State of California and the City and County of Los Angeles deployed federal wildfire prevention and hazard mitigation appropriations between FY 2015 - FY 2025. This ten-year look back should be adequate to ascertain whether mission critical fire prevention for the City and County of Los Angeles had been met, and where federal funding may be most urgently deployed in the coming months and years as we rebuild our devastated communities.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this critically important matter.

Respectfully,



Sue Kohl, President
Pacific Palisades Community Council



Jessica Rogers, President
Pacific Palisades Residents Association

cc (via email):

Joint Legislative Audit Committee Members
The Hon. Ben Allen, California State Senator, District 24
The Hon. Jacqui Irwin, California State Assembly Member, District 42
The Hon. Grant Parks, California State Auditor
The Hon. Pedro Nava, Chair, California "Little Hoover" Commission
The Hon. Traci Park, Los Angeles City Councilwoman, District 11
Wesley Opp, Chief Consultant, JLAC
Tram Truong, Principal Consultant, JLAC
Sheriell Smith-Brandon, Secretary, JLAC