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**Memorandum**

To: Pasadena City Council  
From: Environmental Advisory Commission (EAC)  
Date: July 9, 2025  
Re: Support for Waiving Permitting Fees

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At the May 13, 2025 meeting of the Environmental Advisory Commission, Jesse De Alda, Head of the Building Department, provided an update on the rebuilding process for residents impacted by the Eaton Fire. We appreciated learning that all rebuilds will be subject to the updated California Green Code, which includes energy and water efficiency standards, solar panel requirements, and fire-hardening measures. These are critical steps toward building a climate-resilient Pasadena.

However, we are concerned about the disproportionate financial burden this places on survivors. Many residents report that insurance payouts fall well short of what is needed to rebuild under the new code. This adds to the trauma of losing their homes in a climate-driven disaster fueled by prolonged drought, extreme heat, and high winds—conditions worsened by fossil fuel emissions. Over 180 Pasadena families lost their homes, and are now facing immense emotional and financial stress.

**Recommendation: Waive Permitting Fees for Eaton Fire Survivors**

We strongly support the efforts of the Economic Development and Technology Committee, and urge the full Council to waive all permitting fees for rebuilding homes destroyed or damaged by the Eaton Fire for home owners that were residing in Pasadena before the Eaton Fire (not for new owners). This is a meaningful and immediate way the City can alleviate unnecessary financial burden for residents who are committed to staying and rebuilding in Pasadena.

Other jurisdictions have taken similar action:

- City of Los Angeles<sup>1</sup>: Mayor Karen Bass issued an emergency executive order suspending all rebuilding-related permitting fees for fire survivors.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://mayor.lacity.gov/news/mayor-bass-issues-emergency-executive-order-suspending-collection-rebuilding-fees-palisades>

- Los Angeles County<sup>2</sup>: County Supervisors voted unanimously to waive fees and directed staff to identify funding to offset the loss.
- City of Malibu<sup>3</sup>: Waived all permitting fees for rebuilds after the Wooley Fire.

Unlike these larger jurisdictions, Pasadena's permitting fees are estimated at approximately \$4 million — a relatively modest sum in the context of our recently adopted \$1 billion budget. Waiving these fees is not only financially feasible; it is a sound investment in community stability and climate leadership.

Thank you for considering our recommendation, for your continued leadership as Pasadena recovers from the devastation of the Eaton Fire, and for standing with the families who are fighting to rebuild their lives, their homes, and their place in Pasadena.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://kathrynbarger.lacounty.gov/barger-secures-board-support-to-defer-refund-county-permit-fees-for-la-wildfire-survivors/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://malibucity.org/958/Fee-Waiver-Deadlines#:~:text=The%20City%20is%20waiving%20all,may%20qualify%20for%20a%20refund>