

Agenda Report

February 24, 2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Office of the City Manager

SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL RATIFYING THE CITY MANAGER'S AMENDMENT OF POWER AIR BLOWER REGULATION

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the action proposed herein is not a “project” subject to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to California Public Resources Code Section 21065 and within the meaning of CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b); and
2. Adopt a Resolution ratifying the February 19, 2025, Amendment to the City Manager Power Air Blower Regulation.

BACKGROUND:

On January 8, 2025, the City Manager, as the Director of Disaster Emergency Services of the City (“Director”), declared a local emergency in response to the windstorm and fires that began on January 7, 2025, leading to the Eaton Fire in Altadena and Pasadena. The City Council ratified the Director’s declaration on January 13, 2025. As a result of the Eaton Fire, the use of power air blowers, including leaf blowers, and other similar devices stir up ash and particulate matter into the air, further worsening air quality and increasing health risks for everyone and their pets, particularly for those with respiratory conditions, older adults, children, and other vulnerable populations.

On January 14, 2025, to limit the potential adverse health impacts of fire ash, smoke, and particulate matter caused by the fires, the City Manager issued a Power Air Blower Regulation, in accordance with Chapter 2.370 of the Pasadena Municipal Code, to prohibit use of power air blowers and air propelling devices, such as leaf blowers, in Pasadena. On January 17, 2025, the City Council adopted a resolution ratifying the City Manager’s Power Air Blower regulation.

South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) mobile air monitoring testing conducted on January 31, 2025 showed no elevated levels of heavy metals (such as lead or arsenic) or benzene. Overall, the AQMD results were within background levels and below national standards and state health thresholds. Some elevated levels of methane, possibly from gas leaks, were detected in Altadena and AQMD reported the results to utility agencies for further investigation.

In addition, testing at eight City facilities completed on February 17, 2025 found no asbestos and all lead measurements to be below the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Dust Lead Action Level (DLAL) of 5 micrograms of lead per square foot ($\mu\text{g}/\text{ft}^2$), a strict standard that was established to protect children in homes and childcare centers.

With AQMD mobile monitoring and City facility test results on hand, the City Manager amended the temporary leaf blower ban on February 19, 2025, to allow the use of power air blowers and air propelling devices outside the 2025 Eaton Fire perimeter and at least 50 feet from any fire damaged structure.

Violation of this regulation is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed \$500.00 or by imprisonment not to exceed six months, or both, pursuant to P.M.C. Section 2.370.120.

In accordance with P.M.C. 2.370, the Amendment of Power Air Blower Regulation issued by the City Manager must be confirmed by the City Council at the earliest practical time. This regulation shall be deemed to continue to exist until its termination is proclaimed by the City Council or is rescinded by the City Manager.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The proposed action is consistent with the City Council's strategic planning goal to ensure public safety and health of all those who reside, visit, or work within the City of Pasadena.

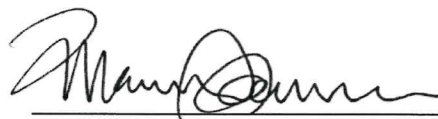
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

CEQA excludes, from environmental review, actions that are not "projects" as defined by CEQA Section 21065 and within the meaning of CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b). Sections 21065 and 15378(b) define a project as an action which may cause either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. Section 15378 excludes from the definition of "project" administrative activities of governments that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment. The actions proposed herein, adopting a resolution ratifying the February 19, 2025 Amendment to the City Manager Power Air Blower Regulation to prohibit the use of power air blowers and air propelling devices, such as leaf blowers, in specific areas of the city is an administrative activity, and therefore is not a "project" as defined by CEQA. Since the action is not a project subject to CEQA, no environmental document is required.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This action may have some impact but the associated costs are expected to be minimal including costs related to enforcement and directing city staff and city contracted services to use alternative methods for cleaning.

Respectfully submitted,



MANUEL CARMONA, MPH, MPA
Director of Public Health

Prepared by:



Arnold F. Lee
Chief Assistant City Attorney

Approved by:



MIGUEL MÁRQUEZ
City Manager

Attachments:

- Attachment A – City Council Resolution
- Attachment B – Amended Power Air Blower Regulation