

Agenda Report

March 3, 2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Public Health Department

SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION RATIFYING THE HEALTH OFFICER'S AMENDED DECLARATION OF LOCAL HEALTH EMERGENCY DUE TO IMPACTS OF CRITICAL FIRE EVENTS AND WINDSTORM CONDITIONS IN THE CITY OF PASADENA

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the proposed action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to state CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) (Common Sense Exemption); and
2. In accordance with Health and Safety Code section 101080, adopt a resolution ratifying the February 24, 2025, Health Officer amended declaration of a local health emergency due to impacts of critical fire events and windstorm conditions in the City of Pasadena.

BACKGROUND:

On January 7, 2025, Pasadena was struck by extraordinarily severe windstorms and destructive fires causing widespread damage to infrastructure, structures, and roads, and caused power outages, downed trees, road closures, and significant debris. Winds and dangerous gusts of over 70 miles per hour, along with destructive fires, threatened structures, businesses, and critical infrastructures in several areas throughout the City.

On January 15, 2025, Dr. Parveen Kaur, in her capacity as Health Officer for the City of Pasadena, issued a declaration of local health emergency due to the potential public health impacts on the City by the windstorm and fires. In the days immediately following the windstorm and fires, there was widespread concern about risks to public health posed by the environmental impact of the Eaton Fire.

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South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) mobile air monitoring results for 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 nine City facilities completed the week ending February 22, 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.

Based on AQMD mobile monitoring and City facility test results, the Health Officer amended the local health emergency on February 24, 2025 to focus response public health efforts on reducing potential exposure to environmental contaminants in ash and particulate matter; ensuring the safe removal of toxic substances from private properties; and positioning the city to access state and federal funding for local health protection efforts.

The amended Declaration of Local Health Emergency was issued in accordance with California Health and Safety Code Section 101080, which authorizes the Local Health Officer to declare a local health emergency. If the declaration is to remain in effect longer than seven days, City Council ratification of a local health emergency is required and the local health emergency must be reviewed at least every 30 days to continue the local health emergency until it is terminated.

The Pasadena Public Health Department will continue to work in collaboration with county, state, and federal partners to collect and evaluate environmental data and will issue additional public health guidance, as needed, to protect public health.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The proposed action is consistent with the City Council's strategic planning goal to ensure public safety by sustaining and enhancing the City's ongoing response to the critical fire events and windstorm conditions to protect the health and safety of Pasadena residents.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

CEQA excludes, from environmental review, actions that are not "projects" as defined by CEQA Guidelines Section 21065 and within the meaning of 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

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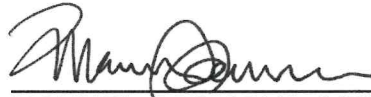
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changes in the environment. The actions proposed herein, a resolution ratifying the Health Officer declaration of a local health emergency, is an administrative activity, and therefore is not a "project" as defined by CEQA. Since the action is not a project subject to CEQA, no environmental document is required.

FISCAL IMPACT:

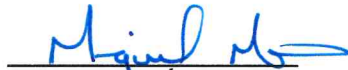
The future costs of responding to the critical fire events and windstorm conditions are unknown at this time due to evolving conditions. Until there is a final determination on potential reimbursement, all expenditures will be recorded and tracked in the Health Fund and/or General Fund using existing appropriations.

Respectfully submitted,



MANUEL CARMONA, MPH, MPA
Director of Public Health

Approved by:



MIGUEL MÁRQUEZ
City Manager

Attachments:

Attachment A – City Council Resolution

Attachment B – Amended Declaration of Local Health Emergency