

Proposed Amendments to SB 549 (Allen)
Resilient Rebuilding Authority Act of 2025

To:

California State Legislature
Senate Local Government Committee
Assembly Committee on Local Government
Office of Senator Ben Allen

Subject:

Proposed Amendments to SB 549 to Ensure Equitable Land Reacquisition and Effective Local Fire Resilience Enforcement

We, the undersigned, respectfully petition for the following amendments to Senate Bill 549 to strengthen protections for displaced residents, ensure fair land recovery, and mandate enforceable fire resilience infrastructure standards.

These amendments reflect the version of SB 549 (Allen) - As Amended June 23, 2025
<https://alcl.assembly.ca.gov/system/files/2025-07/sb-549-allen.pdf>

Amendment 1:

Clarification on Los Angeles Fires and Risk Framing

Add the following to Page 2, COMMENTS, Section 3: “Los Angeles Fires”

According to records provided by the Fire Environment Management System (U.S. Department of Agriculture); the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE); and the National Weather Service (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), both the 2025 Palisades Fire and 2025 Eaton Fire did not occur during unprecedented conditions and were not unforeseen events. The weather conditions on January 7, 2025, were consistent with prior weather patterns in the Los Angeles region. In fact, far worse fire risk conditions have been previously recorded throughout Los Angeles County.

This context should be explicitly acknowledged in SB 549. Similar rationales, such as high winds, water shortages, or “unprecedented conditions”, were cited after the 2018

Woolsey Fire. Recognizing the preventable nature of these fires is crucial to ensuring accountability, accuracy in legislative findings, and equitable treatment of disaster survivors.

Los Angeles County will face even greater disasters in the years ahead, and its laws must reflect a serious, informed commitment to protect and support fire-impacted communities.

Amendment 2:

Land Banking Valuation Language

Replace the following phrases in SB 549:

- Page 3, COMMENTS, Section 4(c): "...at a fair price for land banking..."
- Page 2, SUMMARY, Section 4(c): "...at fair prices to bank land..."

With the following replacement:

"...at the pre-disaster value of the home as recorded in the county tax assessor's database or certified independent appraisal, whichever is higher..."

Justification:

Using "fair market price" language invites speculative post-disaster inflation and land grabs. A pre-disaster valuation ensures displaced homeowners have a reasonable opportunity to return to their communities without being priced out.

Amendment 2:

Local Enforcement of Fire Resilience and Infrastructure Maintenance

Insert a new section into SB 549, preferably following Section 4(d), to read:

Section 4(e):

The City or County in which a Resilient Rebuilding Zone is established shall be required to enforce the following public safety and fire risk mitigation standards:

1. Undergrounding of Utilities:

All utilities, including but not limited to electricity, gas, and water, shall be relocated underground within the Zone to reduce ignition risks and improve disaster resilience.

2. Public Lands Brush Clearance:

The City shall ensure that all brush, overgrowth, and flammable vegetation are removed or maintained in compliance with state defensible space standards on all land owned or operated by the City, County, State of California, or U.S. Government within the Zone.

3. Fire Hydrant Functionality:

The Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD), Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACoFD), and Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) shall jointly verify on a monthly basis that all fire hydrants located within or adjacent to the Zone are functional, pressurized, and accessible.

4. Reservoir Maintenance:

The City shall inspect and report on a monthly basis that the local water reservoir(s) serving the Zone maintain sufficient capacity and flow rates to provide sustained fire suppression support in the event of wildfire.

Justification:

Post-fire rebuilding cannot be considered resilient unless the surrounding infrastructure is proactively maintained. Underground utilities, clear fuel breaks, functioning hydrants, and full reservoirs are not optional, they are lifesaving.

These amendments are critical to ensuring SB 549 fulfills its promise to help communities rebuild equitably, safely, and sustainably. Without enforceable public safety standards and pre-disaster property protections, the bill risks perpetuating the same vulnerabilities that made communities uninhabitable in the first place.

We urge lawmakers to adopt these amendments immediately.

Respectfully,

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