

INDIAN WELLS CITY COUNCIL

January 30, 2025



To: City Council
From: City Manager's Department
Prepared by: Chris Freeland, City Manager
Subject: **Indian Wells Support to those Impacted by Los Angeles County Wildfires**

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

Council **DISCUSSES** and **PROVIDES** direction on opportunities to assist those impacted by the Los Angeles County Wildfires; and

FINDS the project to be exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15060.

DISCUSSION:

On January 7, 2025, multiple wildfires (Palisades, Eaton, and others) began in Los Angeles County and quickly spread through communities due to gusty Santa Ana winds. The fires have scorched tens of thousands of acres of land, damaged or destroyed over 12,000 buildings, destroyed over 10,000 homes, displaced over 180,000 individuals, is responsible for dozens of deaths, and is expected to be the costliest natural disaster to hit Los Angeles County. The fires were not completely contained at the time of this staff report.

In the days following the fires, resources, and donations to assist those impacted by the wildfires have flowed into Southern California. Los Angeles County has activated a website (LA County Recovers: www.recovery.lacounty.gov), which provides daily updates on the wildfires, damage to the region, and a central point of information for those impacted by the wildfires and those wanting to assist. A significant amount of information on the website is dedicated to the various federal, state, county, city, and other agency resources that have been made available to assist those impacted by the wildfires.

The website also provides information on donations from millions of people across the United States looking to assist residents who have been displaced or suffered devastating losses from those fires. Currently, our local hotel partners have provided discounted hotel

rates and waved fees for those displaced. Indian Wells fire personnel from Cal Fire have been assigned to assist in the fire suppression and recovery efforts.

Indian Wells is a generous community that is seeking additional opportunities to assist the many people who have suffered from the wildfires. LA County Recovers suggests that those wanting to help may donate money to a reputable charitable organization such as those listed on the Emergency Network Los Angeles website ([ENLA.ORG](https://enla.org)). The Network includes recognized disaster relief organizations, such as the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, and the California Community Foundation.

LA County Recovers acknowledges that “the avalanche of goods being dropped off—particularly unsolicited donations— is well beyond what many charitable organizations can process at this time.” LA County is working with its public and private partners to triage the flow of support and to develop a system to identify the most urgently needed items and give them to the people who need them the most.

Members of the City Council requested this item be agendaized to provide an update to the community on where to make donations, but also to identify other opportunities for the community to assist. In addition to financial contributions to an [ENLA.ORG](https://enla.org) organization, the City is in contact with Los Angeles County to determine what types of items or care packages the City and residents of Indian Wells can provide to those suffering and the thousands of first responders that are on the front lines.

City staff in collaboration with Community Activities aim to gather the community to provide support for victims of the devastation of wildfires in the Los Angeles area. All donations and/or care packages will be directed to Los Angeles County ensuring the aid is specifically designated for wildfire victims. Additional details will be forthcoming, once Los Angeles County is able to identify other resources needed to assist those impacted by the wildfires.

Staff is seeking Council approval to move forward with a future donation drive and identify if additional support is desired.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA):

The action is not a project within the meaning of Section 15378 of the State of California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) Guidelines, because it has no potential for resulting in physical change in the environment, directly or indirectly; and that the action is nonetheless exempt from the requirements of CEQA in that the activity is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. (14 CCR 15061(b)(3).)