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Kagel Canyon Civic Assn.
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N. Beverly Dr./Franklin Canyon
Oak Forest Canyon Assn.
Oaks Homeowners Assn.
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Rancho Verdugo Estates
Residents of Beverly Glen
Roscomare Valley Assn.
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Save Sunset Blvd.
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Silver Lake Heritage Trust
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Whitley Heights Civic Assn.



Honorable Members of the Public Safety Committee
Councilmember Mitchell Englander, Chair
City Hall Room 1010
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

June 25, 2015

Re: **Council File 14-0713**
Motion re No Smoking Signs / Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones

Honorable Councilmembers:

The Federation of Hillside and Canyon Associations, Inc., founded in 1952, represents 44 resident and homeowner associations with approximately 200,000 constituents spanning the Santa Monica Mountains. The mission of the Federation is to promote those policies and programs that will best preserve the natural topography and wildlife of the mountains and hillsides for the benefit of all the people of Los Angeles.

The risk of wildfire in our City's hillside areas is of utmost concern among the Federation's constituent organizations. Fire is now an omnipresent threat in hillside communities and the threat is greatly elevated by the ongoing drought, the worst in California history. Our member organizations have grave concerns regarding lack of awareness and enforcement of existing City fire regulations to protect the City's "Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones."

At a recent Federation meeting, the board voted to support the Public Safety Committee's consideration of Council File 14-0713 (Koretz) to study the feasibility of improving fire safety throughout the City's "Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones" (in which the majority of our member organizations are located) through a combination of additional signage and establishment of a \$1,000 fine for violations of the "no smoking/no fire" components of the City's existing Fire Code (*see* LAMC Sec. 57.25.14). Additional signage and enforcement would greatly enhance public safety by increasing awareness of the high risk of wildfire throughout the City's wildland areas, as well as increasing awareness of and compliance with City law.

In addition, Federation members urge the Public Safety Committee to consider the renewal of previous fire safety-related council files that expired before action was taken. These include CF 09-1977 (Koretz, expired Oct. 4, 2011) and CF 12-1920 (Koretz, expired Dec. 12, 2014) (both attached).

CHAIRS EMERITI
Shirley Cohen
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CHAIRS IN MEMORIUM
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Polly Ward

CF 09-1977 was to consider amendment of the City's Fire and Municipal Codes to establish safety and fire suppression equipment standards for homeowners and brush clearance contractors (the City currently provides only brush clearance safety tips, but does not require the use of specific safety measures).

CF 12-1920 acknowledged that the City was not following its code-mandated process to have requests for deviations from the Fire Code by builders heard by the Board of Fire Commissioners upon recommendation of the Fire Marshall (instead deviations were being determined by LAFD staff without review of the Board). Passage of the motion would have required the LAFD to report back on its process for reviewing requests for deviations as well as on all deviations requested and granted for the previous three years.

Our hillside Councilmembers often have very worthy ideas that would enhance public safety, but these measures can only be successful if they are duly considered and when appropriate, implemented. We urge you to thoughtfully consider pending motion 14-0713, as well as renew expired motions 09-1977 and 12-1290 for future consideration by the City Council.

Sincerely,

Marian Dodge
Marian Dodge

Encl.

cc: Members of the Public Safety Committee
Councilmember Mitchell Englander, Chair
Councilmember Joe Buscaino
Councilmember Mike Bonin
Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell
Councilmember Nury Martinez
Councilmember Koretz
Councilmember Gilbert Cedillo

09-1977
Refer to 05-1454

PUBLIC SAFETY

MOTION

Each year, beginning May 1, the Fire Department inspects more than 130,000 individual parcels located in approximately 160 square miles in the City's Very High Hazard Severity Zone. The Los Angeles Municipal Code requires homeowners to clear hazardous vegetation on their property as follows:

- within five feet of roof surfaces;
- within 10 feet of roadways (driveway, road, alley);
- within 10 feet of combustible fences;
- within 10 feet of a chimney outlet; and,
- within 200 feet of structures.

Unfortunately, on occasion, brush has been ignited when homeowners or their contractors are clearing vegetation on the property. Any fires that result can be caused from sparks produced from metal blades on motorized equipment used to clear the brush. To prevent such occurrences, homeowners must take precautions during brush clearance to ensure that fires are not inadvertently started.

I, THEREFORE MOVE that Council instruct the Fire Department, with the assistance of the City Attorney, to report back in 30 days with recommendations on amendments to the Fire Code and Municipal Code, as appropriate, on the requirements homeowners, and their contractors, must follow when clearing brush from their property. The report should include (a) the appropriate equipment for brush clearance to maximize safety, and (b) requirements for the use of fire extinguishers or other fire retardant to ensure that a fire could be immediately contained or prevented.

PRESENTED BY

Paul Koretz

PAUL KORETZ
Councilmember, 5th District

SECONDED BY

Joetta

ORIGINAL

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12-1920

PUBLIC SAFETY

DEC 11 2012

MOTION

The Los Angeles Municipal and Fire Codes provide that the Board of Fire Commissioners, upon recommendation from the Fire Marshall, is responsible for considering requests from builders for deviations from the provisions of the Fire Code.

It appears, however, that staff from the Fire Department, rather than the Board of Fire Commissioners, has in fact been making these determinations without review by the Board. In addition, to being contrary to the Code, this process makes it very difficult for the public to participate in this important public safety process.

It is critical that we ensure fire safety in any new construction particularly in the hillsides which are at a greater risk for fire. If the Fire Marshall determines that a deviation is warranted, this determination must be subject to Board review.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Fire Department report to the Council's Public Safety Committee within 45 days on its process for reviewing requests for deviations from the Municipal and Fire Codes, including providing copies of all written policies governing such requests.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Fire Department report on all deviations requested and granted within the past three years.

Presented by: 
Paul Koretz
Councilmember, 5th District

Seconded by:  :

ORIGINAL


DEC 11 2012