

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

October 20, 2025

Marqueece Harris-Dawson
President
Los Angeles City Council
City Hall, Room 340
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mr. Harris-Dawson:

In January 2025, a number of wildfires, including the Palisades fire, devastated Los Angeles County, California. These fires caused billions of dollars in damage to homes and businesses, and tragically resulted in loss of life.¹ Public reports have raised questions about Los Angeles's wildfire preparations and the response to the January 2025 wildfires, including the Palisades fire. For example, even though a suspect was recently charged with starting the Lachman fire, the Palisades fire appears to have been caused by a reignition of the Lachman fire, even though Los Angeles officials stated that the fire was "fully contained."² Additionally, a July 2025 preliminary report issued by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power ("LADWP") identified issues with critical water systems necessary for fire suppression, including loss of pressure to fire hydrants.³ There have also been other allegations that the mismanagement of reservoirs led to a lack of water on the day that residents in Los Angeles County needed it most.⁴

Pursuant to Senate Resolution 94 (119th Cong.), the United States Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (the "Subcommittee") is conducting a review of Los Angeles's wildfire mitigation and suppression efforts, including the response to the Palisades fire. To assist the Subcommittee in its review, please provide the following information and records. Unless otherwise stated, the period of time covered by this request is from February 1, 2022, to present.

¹ Shiyun Li and William Yu, Economic Impact of Los Angeles Wildfires, UCLA Anderson School of Management, Mar. 3, 2025, available at <https://www.anderson.ucla.edu/about/centers/ucla-anderson-forecast/economic-impact-los-angeles-wildfires>; Nadine Yousif, More than 400 indirect deaths linked to LA wildfires, study suggests, BBC, Aug. 6, 2025, available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx29wjg3vz2o>.

² Richard Winton, *Florida man 'maliciously' started Palisades fire, then tried to cover his tracks, authorities allege*, L.A. Times (Oct. 8, 2025), <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2025-10-08/palisades-fire-arrest>.

³ Los Angeles Department of Water & Power, LADWP Palisades Fire Water System Preliminary Report, July 3, 2025, available at <https://www.ladwpnews.com/ladwp-palisades-fire-water-system-preliminary-report-july-3-2025/>.

⁴ First Amended Complaint at 15, *Grigsby, et al. v. City of Los Angeles, et al.*, No. 25-STCV-00832 (L.A. Super. Ct., Jan. 13, 2025).

1. All records⁵ referring or relating to wildfire preparation, suppression, and response (including alerts, notifications, and evacuation plans) between December 28, 2024 and the present, including but not limited to the response to the Palisades and Lachman fires.
2. All records referring or relating to proposed budget cuts and workforce reductions at the Los Angeles Fire Department (“LAFD”) or LADWP.
3. All records referring or relating to the Palisades and Eaton fires, including but not limited to:
 - a. All communications between and among members of and employees at the City Council’s Office;
 - b. Any after action or other assessment of the cause of the Palisades and Eaton fires, including all communications related to the suspected non-natural or man-made causes;
 - c. All communications referring or related to Jonathan Rinderknecht;⁶ and
 - d. All communications with residents of the Pacific Palisades.
4. All records referring or relating to any reports or investigations of arson, burglary, theft, or looting in fire-affected areas, including but not limited to communications with law enforcement or emergency management agencies.
5. All records referring or relating to the Santa Ynez Reservoir and the Chautauqua Reservoir (also known as the “Palisades Reservoir”), including but not limited to all communications with the LADWP regarding the closure of the Santa Ynez Reservoir.
6. All records referring or relating to the February 21, 2025, removal of Kristin M. Crowley from her role as Fire Chief of the LAFD.
7. All records referring or relating to the creation or oversight of diversity, equity, and inclusion (“DEI”) hiring policies for the LAFD and the LADWP from April 1, 2020, to present, including the budgetary impact of DEI programs or initiatives and how the City Council’s “efforts to dismantle systemic racism”⁷ applied to these departments.

⁵ “Records” include any written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including resolutions, letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (such as texts, emails, email attachments, and any other electronically-created or stored information), calendar entries, inter-office communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether or not they resulted in final documents).

⁶ On October 8, 2025, the Acting U.S. Attorney for the Central District of California announced that Jonathan Rinderknecht had been arrested and charged with “maliciously starting what became the Palisades Fire.” See Acting U.S. Attorney Bill Essayli (@USAttyEssayli), X (Oct. 8, 2025, 12:01 pm), <https://x.com/USAttyEssayli/status/1975954598201536880>.

⁷ *Resolution*, Res. No. 2020-0715, Los Angeles City Council (June 9, 2020), https://cityclerk.lacity.org/onlinedocs/2020/20-0715_reso_06-09-2020.pdf.

8. All records referring or relating to redevelopment in fire-affected areas,⁸ including but not limited to:
 - a. Building or land-use permits, applications, or approvals;
 - b. Proposed or enacted changes to regulations;
 - c. Proposed or enacted zoning modifications or variances;
 - d. Proposals for or approvals of low-income housing developments;
 - e. Proposals for or approvals of multifamily housing developments; and
 - f. The construction of public transportation stations.
9. All communications referring or relating to wildfire prevention, mitigation, or suppression, including but not limited to the Palisades fire, between members of and employees of the City Council and any employee or official with the following entities:
 - a. LADWP;
 - b. Los Angeles Mayor's Office;
 - c. Office of the Governor of California;
 - d. LAFD;
 - e. Los Angeles County Fire Department; and
 - f. Any federal agency or department.

Please produce this information as soon as possible, but no later than 5:00 p.m. EST on November 3, 2025. If you have any questions about this request, please contact Subcommittee staff at (202) 224-3721 and (202) 224-0909. Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Senator Ron Johnson
Chairman
Permanent Subcommittee
on Investigations



Senator Rick Scott
Member
Permanent Subcommittee
on Investigations

cc: The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

Members of The Los Angeles City Council

⁸ Michelle Ma & John Gittelsohn, *L.A. Wildfire Rebuilding Effort Strained by Permits, High Costs*, Bloomberg (Sept. 25, 2025), <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2025-09-25/la-wildfire-rebuilding-effort-strained-by-permits-high-costs>.