


**SUPPLEMENTAL
REPORT TO THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

DATE ISSUED:	February 25, 2025	
MEETING DATE:	February 26, 2025	AGENDA 7 ITEM:
PROJECT NUMBER:	PRJ2025-000134-(3)	
PROJECT NAME:	Santa Monica Mountains Coastal Zone Disaster Recovery Ordinance	
PLAN NUMBER(S):	Advance Planning Case No. RPPL2025000161	
SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT:	3	
PROJECT LOCATION:	Santa Monica Mountains Coastal Zone	
PROJECT PLANNER:	Cameron Robertson, Senior Regional Planner Crobertson@planning.lacounty.gov	

This item is the Santa Monica Mountains Coastal Zone Disaster Recovery Ordinance (“ordinance”), which amends Title 22 (Planning and Zoning) of the Los Angeles County Code to facilitate disaster recovery in the Santa Monica Mountains Coastal Zone. This ordinance amends the Santa Monica Mountains Local Implementation Program (“LIP”) to include provisions for temporary housing and the reconstruction of homes, associated utilities, and access for properties that suffered irreparable damage or destruction from disasters such as a wildfire.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Since the posting of the hearing package on February 13, 2025, staff received additional materials in the form of public comment letters, which are attached here. Two additional letters were received with suggestions for revising the ordinance.

Report
Reviewed By: 
Thuy Hua, Supervising Regional Planner

Report
Approved By: 
Connie Chung, Deputy Director



Project No. PRJ2025-000134-(3)
Advance Planning Case No. RPPL2025000161
Santa Monica Mountains Planning Area

Cameron,

We at the Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation thank you for your attending our meeting to discuss the proposed Amendment to facilitate disaster recovery in the Santa Monica Mountains in the Coastal Zone.

As you know our organization represents some 24 rural villages in the Santa Monica Mountains with thousands of stakeholders. We urge the Dept. of Regional Planning to consider when issuing permits under this proposed ordinance the following:

1. The rebuild benefits apply only to original property owners
2. Rebuild permits/ de Minimis Waiver MUST maintain protections for recorded, sensitive habitats in SMM Coastal Zone, especially if structure relocation is requested by owner
3. The 10% increase should not apply if pre-existing Residence that are already at the maximum allowed sq. footage.
The additional 10% applies only to Primary residence.
- 4 The Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation and other interested parties must be included in all notices pertaining to this amendment

Thank you for allowing us to comment on this very important amendment.

Roger Pugliese
Acting President



To
Regional Planning Commission and Staff,

Subject: Written comments on LA County SMM LIP Amendment Provisions & Request for Additional Provisions

We extend our deepest sympathies to those who have lost their homes or have been impacted by recent devastating disasters. The scale of destruction is immense, necessitating a coordinated effort to rebuild and restore our communities. In alignment with this urgent need, we are committed to supporting the reconstruction efforts in Los Angeles County.

To facilitate an efficient and effective rebuilding process, it is imperative to establish policies that realistically and practically accelerate reconstruction timelines. Accordingly, we submit the following comments and requests for additional provisions to be considered in the Los Angeles County Santa Monica Mountains (SMM) Local Implementation Plan (LIP) Amendment.

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS COASTAL ZONE DISASTER RECOVERY ORDINANCE

Land use Implementation Plan Amendment

Section 22.44.820 Exemptions

The proposed amendment includes provisions for:

- Replacement structure (plus 10%)
- Replacement of damaged Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS) with up to 10% additional capacity to meet minimum code requirements
- Replacement of on-site water tanks with up to 10% additional capacity to meet minimum code requirements.

E. De Minimis Waiver (DMW) of CDP

1. A DMW may be issued by the director for the items listed below, where improvements are not otherwise exempt pursuant to sec 22.44.820

- a. Improvement replacement or relocation of undamaged OWTS within the Building site.



- b. Replacement of damaged OWTS, not exempt where the replacement is required to have a capacity that is more than 10% greater than the previous OWTS to meet minimum code requirements, within building site or same general area.

We request clarification and expansion of code language to address the following:

- Consideration for cases where high groundwater levels or other site constraints necessitate placement of replacement OWTS outside the designated building site.
- Provisions for situations where the available building site is too small to meet Environmental Health (EH) horizontal setback requirements, requiring OWTS placement outside the designated building site.

- c. Improvement replacement or relocation of undamaged On-Site Water Tanks within the Building site.

To enhance fire safety and disaster recovery, we propose:

- The inclusion of provisions allowing the installation of new water tanks on disaster recovery properties where the public water system does not meet required fire flow standards. Deficiencies in the water system pose significant rebuilding challenges, and allowing alternative onsite water storage solutions would improve compliance with Fire Department requirements and streamline the reconstruction process. Fire Department Chief Marrone publicly supported this provision during a fire rebuild community workshop held in Malibu in January 2025.

- d. Replacement of damaged On-Site Water Tanks, not exempt where the replacement is required to have a capacity that is more than 10% greater than the previous OWTS to meet minimum code requirements, within building site or same general area.

Request for additional provisions:

- Consideration for cases where new water tanks must be located outside the designated building site but within an approved Fuel Modification (FM) area and H3 habitat zone



- e. Relocation of structure due to Debris Flow
- f. Improvements to existing driveways or access roads – located on the same lot as a structure was damaged or destroyed by disaster.

We request additional provisions to facilitate compliance with Fire Department (FD) requirements:

- Consideration for cases where an existing driveway must be widened within an access easement on a neighboring property to meet FD standards.
 - Consideration for cases where minor modifications to the driveway alignment on slopes exceeding 25% are required to achieve compliance with FD requirements.
 - Inclusion of onsite hammerhead turnarounds and 5' wide hose pull path as necessary fire protection measures in compliance with FD codes.
 - Clarification that over-excavation and compaction required to prepare fire rebuild sites and grading necessary for the foundation of fire rebuild structures be exempt from grading permit requirements under the fire rebuild provisions.
 - Inclusion of minor driveway improvements associated with addition, improvement, and alteration projects approved under a Coastal Development Permit (CDP) Exemption. Presently, minor driveway improvements to meet FD requirements require a Minor CDP, which can take 2-4 years for approval. To expedite compliance, we propose allowing these improvements to be processed under a De Minimis Waiver (DMW) instead.
- g. Exploratory Testing - The evaluation of soil and/or hydrologic conditions or geologic hazards for a legally established dwelling unit or commercial structure that was destroyed or rendered uninhabitable by a disaster.

We appreciate the inclusion of the DMW provision for exploratory testing related to fire rebuild properties. However, we wish to highlight a critical issue:

- The Department of Regional Planning (DRP) currently requires a Minor CDP for exploratory testing in the unincorporated SMM Coastal Zone, resulting in approval timelines of approximately two to four years. By contrast, the City of Malibu processes similar approvals within two to three months.



- To ensure a fair and efficient process for property owners in the unincorporated SMM Coastal Zone, we respectfully request that the DMW provision for exploratory testing be expanded to include **all** properties, not just fire rebuild projects.

Please refer to Exhibits attached.

We appreciate the County's efforts in facilitating the SMM LIP Amendment and including disaster recovery provisions. We remain committed to supporting initiatives that streamline the rebuilding process while maintaining environmental and public safety standards. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Neelima Gadicherla

Senior Planner, Schmitz and Associates

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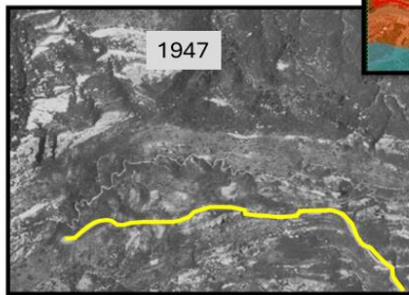


Exhibit A – Fire rebuild properties requiring Off-Site Driveway widening

Minor CDP for minor access improvements of the existing access road for approved SFR to meet Fire Department requirements. (off-site driveway)

Access Driveway Widening :

- No impacts to ESHA
- Driveway widening proposed within H3 habitat.
- Driveway in existence from 1940s
- Minor grading (over 50 Cys)



Minor Driveway improvements/widening required off-site on neighbor's property within the available easement





Exhibit B – Vacant lots requiring exploratory testing

LA County SMM Coastal Zone

Properties with access and graded pads for exploratory testing

- No Impacts on ESHA
- Access available to site for boring equipment.
- No additional grading required on site

