

**CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION**

South Coast District Office  
301 E Ocean Blvd., Suite 300  
Long Beach, CA 90802-4302  
(562) 590-5071



**Th13a**

**LCP-5-LGB-21-0042-1 (CITY OF LAGUNA BEACH)  
AUGUST 11, 2022**

**CORRESPONDENCE**

## Public Comment on August 2022 Agenda Item Thursday 13a - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-21-0042-1

Lawson, Matt <mlawson@lagunabeachcity.net>

Fri 8/5/2022 4:58 PM

To: SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Cc: Wiener, Marc@CityofLagunaBeach <mwiener@lagunabeachcity.net>; King, Niko FD <nking@lagunabeachcity.net>; Manning, Brendan FD <bmann@lagunabeachcity.net>; Whalen, Bob <bwhalen@lagunabeachcity.net>; Gibbs, Thomas <tgibbs@lagunabeachcity.net>; Niccum, Bill <bniccum@lagunabeachcity.net>; Horne, David <dhorne@lagunabeachcity.net>

Dear Commissioners and Staff, the Laguna Beach Emergency/Disaster Preparedness Committee (EDPC), which I currently chair, advises Council on disaster prevention, planning and preparedness.

We support Commission staff's recommendation to approve the City's LCP amendments and Implementation Plan with the specified modifications, as agreed to by the City.

These amendments will materially improve fire safety by streamlining the City's permitting process to encouraging residents to "harden" their homes utilizing fire-resistant materials and methods in accordance with California Building Code Chapter 7A and create defensible space within what fire agencies and fire safety NGOs call the "home ignition zone."

These changes will also allow the City to better protect our entire community through what Commission staff once described as the most environmentally sensitive fuel mod program they had seen.

The very attributes of climate, geography, topography, vegetation and development pattern, which make LB such a uniquely beautiful place, also make us and our ecosystem extremely vulnerable to wildfire and urban conflagration.

With nearly 90% of the City designated VHFHSZ, our "extreme fire hazard" is well documented in the City's Safety Element, Emergency Management Plan, FEMA-approved Hazard Mitigation Plan and Wildfire Mitigation & Fire Safety Report. The Emerald Fire in February and the Coastal Fire in May, both on our doorstep, underscored this escalating, exigent and existential threat.

Ten days ago, the National Fire Protection Assn. Wildfire Division Director told us that that the combination of home hardening with fuel modification is essential to prevent wildfires from becoming disastrous "urban conflagrations." That's in line with fire science put forth by CalFIRE, the CA Dept. of Insurance, the US Forest Service, the National Assn of Insurance Commissioners Center for Insurance Policy & Research and the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety.

Fire disasters are also environmental catastrophes. In February, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) published a 126-page report from 50 of the world's leading climate scientists.

UNEP identified the huge quantities of GHG generated by what they call "Extraordinary Landscape Fires" as a major climate change accelerant and recommended vegetation management to help mitigate that hazard: ***"Eliminating the risk of wildfires is not possible, but much can be done to manage and reduce risks...including .... management of vegetation and vegetation debris (wildfire fuel) to decrease fire hazard prior to wildfires occurring...Managed fuels improve the effectiveness of fire suppression efforts, increase firefighter safety, and decrease detrimental impacts on ecosystems."***

Thank you for all you do to protect our coast and for your consideration of these comments.  
Cordially, Matt Lawson, Laguna Beach Emergency/Disaster Preparedness Committee