



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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City Council Approves Brush Clearance Ordinance **The fire-safety law bans metal weed whackers in high-risk areas**

Los Angeles -- Today, the Los Angeles City Council unanimously approved an ordinance drafted by the City Attorney in conjunction with the Los Angeles Fire Department to increase requirements for brush clearance and fire safety in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. The ordinance, called for by Councilmembers Paul Koretz and David Ryu, puts a ban on metal weed whackers in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, among other requirements.

"Over the past year we have seen a tremendous increase in the number of fires in our hillsides and with the negative ramifications of climate change, it will be this way for the foreseeable future. That is why we have taken these long overdue steps to increase safety protocols for brush clearance in the hills of Los Angeles," said Councilmember Paul Koretz whose Fifth District hillside areas include Encino Hills, Benedict Canyon and Bel Air.

"As our risk of fire continues to rise in Los Angeles, so must our level of caution," Councilmember Ryu said. "All it takes is one spark to start a potentially devastating fire. That's why I worked so diligently on this reform with Councilmember Koretz, the Los Angeles Fire Department, and our hillside communities, and why I'm thrilled to see it approved today."

Together, Councilmembers David Ryu and Paul Koretz represent much of Central Los Angeles' hillsides, from Griffith Park to Bel-Air, which are at a significantly greater risk of brush fire. Between June and September of this year, the Los Angeles Fire Department responded to three brush fires in Griffith Park, one of which evacuated more than 2,000 people. In June of this year, The Portola fire evacuated about 86 homes in the Benedict Canyon neighborhood of Council District Five after a weed whacker's metal blade sparked a blaze that burned approximately 40 acres of brush.

Regarding the Portola fire, Councilmember Koretz added "I also want to thank Los Angeles Fire Department for partnering with us to create safer conditions for our hillside residents. We were very lucky that the Portola Fire was contained relatively quickly thanks to the swift action of the LAFD, but if the brush clearance crew had used other brush cutting tools and had at the very least been carrying fire extinguishers, we could've saved a lot of money and worry."

The ordinance was approved with an urgency clause, which means it takes effect as soon as the Mayor signs it into law, within the next 10 days. It not only includes a ban on metal weed whackers, but also new requirements for brush clearance in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ), including that brush clearance cannot be conducted during red flag days, that proper extinguishing agents be nearby during brush clearance, and others. It also creates new penalties for violations.

Read the ordinance [here](#).

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Los Angeles Councilmember Paul Koretz represents the 5th Council District which includes Encino, Bel-Air, Westwood, Century City, West Los Angeles, Rancho Park, Cheviot Hills, Beverly Grove, Carthay Circle, Palms, Beverlywood, Pico Robertson, and Fairfax/Melrose districts.

Los Angeles City Councilmember David E. Ryu represents the 4th Council District which includes Griffith Park, Sherman Oaks, Toluca Lake, Hollywood, Hollywood Hills, Los Feliz, Silver Lake, Miracle Mile, Hancock Park, Windsor Square, Larchmont and portions of Koreatown and Van Nuys.