

**County of Los Angeles  
Health Agency**

**DECLARATION OF A LOCAL HEALTH EMERGENCY AND ORDER  
PROHIBITING THE ENDANGERMENT OF THE COMMUNITY  
THROUGH THE UNSAFE REMOVAL, TRANSPORT, AND DISPOSAL  
OF FIRE DEBRIS**

**WHEREAS**, California Health and Safety Code section 101040 authorizes the local health officer to take any preventative measure that may be necessary to protect and preserve public health from any public hazard during an emergency;

**WHEREAS**, the California Health and Safety Code, Division 101, Part 3, Chapter 2, commencing with section 101075 confers upon Local Health Officer or the Director of Environmental Health of the political subdivisions of this state emergency powers necessary to protect public health and safety;

**WHEREAS**, section 101080 of the California Health and Safety Code, states that “the local health officer OR director may declare a local health emergency in the jurisdiction of any area thereof” affected by hazardous waste which is an imminent threat to the public health;

**WHEREAS**, the potential for widespread toxic exposures and threats to public health and the environment exists in the aftermath of a major wildfire disaster, and debris and ash from residential structure fires contain hazardous substances that can result in adverse health impacts to the public;

**WHEREAS**, the combustion of building materials such as siding, roofing tiles, and insulation result in dangerous ash that may contain asbestos, heavy metals, and other hazardous substances, and household hazardous substances such as paint, gasoline, cleaning products, pesticides, compressed gas cylinders, and chemicals may have been stored in homes, garages, or sheds that may have burned or released in the fire, also producing hazardous substances;

**WHEREAS**, exposure to hazardous substances may lead to acute and chronic health effects and may cause long-term public health and environmental impacts; uncontrolled hazardous substances and debris pose significant threats to public health through inhalation of dust particles and contamination of drinking water supplies; and improper handling can expose workers to toxic materials, and improper transport and disposal of fire debris can spread hazardous substances throughout the community;

**WHEREAS**, the Health Officer of Los Angeles County finds that the wildfire (known as the Woolsey fire) that started on November 8, 2018, and other concurrent fire events have created an imminent threat to public health in Los Angeles County in the form of contaminated fire debris from household hazardous waste and materials and structural debris resulting from the destruction of hundreds of structures;

**WHEREAS**, areas that have been closed to reentry by residents and the public for safety reasons are being opened or will be opened in the near future;

**WHEREAS**, this hazardous waste debris poses a substantial present or potential hazard to human health and the environment when improperly treated, stored, transported, or disposed of, or otherwise managed;

**WHEREAS**, the California Office of Emergency Services may establish a voluntary Fire Debris Clearance Program to ensure the safe removal, transport, and disposal of hazardous fire debris in a manner that will protect the public health and safety;

**WHEREAS**, property owners that do not participate in the Fire Debris Clearance Program must conduct their private debris removal, transport, and disposal in a manner that does not endanger the community and that complies with all legal requirements;

**NOW, THEREFORE, A LOCAL HEALTH EMERGENCY IS HEREBY DECLARED**, in the areas of Los Angeles County impacted by the Woolsey fire, Hill fire, and concurrent fires.

**FURTHER, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:**

1. No removal of fire debris resulting from the Woolsey fire and concurrent fires in Los Angeles County shall occur from properties without a hazardous materials inspection conducted either by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency or California Department of Toxic Substances Control or the Los Angeles County Fire Department's Unified Program Agency. The term "removal of fire debris" as used in this order includes all cleanup of fire debris, but it does not include the removal of personal property from residential sites.

2. Pending the enactment of additional requirements to address the Woolsey fire and concurrent fires disaster clean up, no debris bins shall be provided to property owners for the purposes of the removal of fire debris without the authorization of the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

3. Pending the enactment of additional requirements to address the Woolsey fire and concurrent fires disaster clean up, property owners that opt out of the Fire Debris Clearance Program if one is established in Los Angeles County must register with and obtain the permission of the Los Angeles County before beginning the removal of fire debris and conduct their private debris removal, transport, and disposal in a manner that does not endanger the community.

4. This order applies in the incorporated and unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County impacted by the Woolsey fire and concurrent fires within Los Angeles County.

\_\_\_\_ 11/12/18 \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
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Muntu Davis M.D.  
Los Angeles County Health Officer