December 2, 2025

LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT

JAIME E. MOORE
FIRE CHIEF

November 24, 2025

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
FILE NO. 25-075

TO: Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM: Jaime E. Moore, Fire Chief

SUBJECT: 2026-27 PROPOSED BUDGET REQUESTS IN SUPPORT OF AFTER ACTION REVIEW REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

FINAL ACTION:	____ Approved	____ Approved w/Corrections	____ Withdrawn
	____ Denied	____ Received & Filed	____ Other

SUMMARY

During the Board of Fire Commissioners meeting on November 4, 2025, the Board requested a report on how the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026-27 proposed budget supports the recommendations from the Palisades Fire After Action Review (AARR). The Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) respectfully submits its proposed budget requests for FY 2026-27, totaling $1,199,804,455 across the operating budget and non-departmental requests. This proposed budget will reinforce and accelerate operational enhancements implemented following the devastating Palisades wind-driven vegetation fire in January 2025. The AARR highlighted critical lessons learned regarding preparedness, incident command and control, resource deployment, and tactical action necessary for enhancing future wildfire response.

The Department's core objective is to sustain the shift toward proactive deployment, improved weather intelligence, and clearly defined wildland responsibilities. The proposed budget includes workforce expansion, technology modernization, and resilient Emergency Medical Services (EMS) capacity during the high demands of the wildfire season.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board:
Receive and file this report.

DISCUSSION

The proposed budget addresses the core operational gaps and challenges identified in the AARR, which noted deficiencies in staffing, command organization, logistical support, and mitigation efforts during the initial attack of the Palisades Fire.

1. Workforce Readiness and Sustainability (AARR Recommendation: Improve Recall and Increase Staffing):

The AARR emphasized that the reliance on voluntary scheduled overtime and financial constraints hindered the ability to fill every available seat, severely straining resources during the initial attack. It recommended reviewing recall procedures and reconstructing coded-assign hire to ensure adequate daily staffing.

Budget Support:

- The budget requests funding for two new academy classes of 60 recruits each in FY 2026-27, plus the continuation of one class, totaling 179 new recruits. This investment is critical to meet attrition and maintain operation.
- Funding is requested for the Behavioral Health Program Critical Staffing Needs ($283,010) and the Early Symptom Intervention and Wellness-Fitness Program Operating Costs ($256,710) to support firefighter readiness and mitigate performance and safety concerns caused by physical exhaustion during long-duration wildfires.

2. Frontline Operational Capacity and Command (AARR Challenge: Incident Organization and Resource Deployment):

Post-incident analysis cited issues with confusing incident organization, lack of accountability for specialized resources, and the need for more immediate, no-delay deployment of additional units to reinforce wildfire operations without degrading citywide coverage.

Budget Support:

- The budget requests restoring 42 Emergency Incident Technicians (EITs) ($6,505,505). This supports the recommendation to staff all overhead positions early to create the basic skeleton of the Incident Command System (ICS), improve accountability, and strengthen command support during complex incidents.
- Staffing is requested for additional Fast Response Vehicles (FRVs) (24 FFPM, $4,179,017) and Advanced Life Support (ALS) and Basic Life Support (BLS) Rescue Ambulances (72 positions, totaling over $7.8 million). These units address high call volume attributed to Emergency Medical Services (EMS) (over 80% of calls), ensuring that fire companies remain on the fireline for suppression.
- Staffing requests for Full Staffing for Hazmat 87 and Hazmat 48 ($2,261,689 each) are included to address increasing risks from alternative fuel technologies (e.g., lithium-ion battery fires), which contributed to prolonged exposure to gases and products of combustion during the Palisades incident.

3. Wildfire Mitigation, Response, and Recovery (AARR Challenge: Containment and Egress):

The AARR noted the failure to secure the fire's point of origin and challenges posed by limited access/egress in high-hazard zones. It recommended prioritizing hand crews and dozers at the heel of the fire and conducting assessments to establish two evacuation routes in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ).

Budget Support:

- The budget funds a second Wildland Paid Hand Crew (32 positions, $1,985,849) to strengthen fuel reduction, support faster initial attack, and assist with extended wildland operations.
- Hydrant and Access Plan Check Support for Palisades rebuilding (2 positions, $190,209) is requested to assist with the recovery area, addressing reconstruction needs and meeting the Mayor's Emergency Executive Order #8 requirements.
- Continued funding for the Helitanker Lease ($885,480) supports air operations that were critical, despite wind challenges, in providing support where ground crews could not reach.

4. Technology, Command, and Fiscal Support (AARR Challenges: Loss of Communication and Resource Tracking):

Challenges included the loss of cellular service, difficulties in resource accountability, and the need for updated technology in dispatch and command vehicles.

Budget Support:

- Investments include Tablet Command and First Due Pre-Plan Mapping Software subscriptions ($553,000) to enable digital resource accountability and real-time mapping, fulfilling the need for tracking applications that maintain accountability identified as a success during the incident.
- Funding requested for Mobile Data Computer (MDC) and Radio Equipment Upgrades ($1,500,000) will replace outdated laptops with iPads, providing technology necessary to maintain situational awareness despite losing broadband connection.
- Funding for Information Technology Recurring Expenditures ($1,958,192) and cybersecurity staffing will maintain critical radio infrastructure and network security.

5. Supporting Administration and Logistics (AARR Challenges: Administrative Strain):

The Administrative areas struggled, including grants management and revenue recovery, and civilian staffing was needed to offset workload for sworn members and reduce work backlogs.

Budget Support:

- Staffing requests include Grants Management (2 positions, $155,810) and Revenue Section Support (1 position, $84,901) to efficiently manage the grant portfolio, secure federal reimbursements (such as FMAG), and reduce workload backlogs, and the need for administrative support to manage major incident overtime ensuring proper cost recovery systems are in place.

CONCLUSION

The FY 2026-27 proposed budget requests are essential to solidify the LAFD's improved operation, transforming the lessons learned and recommendations derived from the Palisades Fire After Action Review Report into sustained, funded capabilities. By funding critical positions (EITs, Hand Crew), modern technology (mapping software, tablet replacement), and resilient EMS capacity, the LAFD secures the resilience needed to manage future all-risk emergencies and wildfire responses for Los Angeles.

Board report prepared by Joseph A. Everett, Chief Deputy, Administrative Operations.