

Palisades Fire Sparks Fear of Land Grabs, Forced Redevelopment in LA

Local officials and residents are raising alarm over possible exploitation of the Palisades Fire aftermath by political and corporate interests. Los Angeles City Council Member Traci Park warned this week that some elected officials and developers may be using the crisis to advance unwanted policy goals, including forced redevelopment and increased housing density.

The Palisades Fire ignited on January 7 and scorched more than 23,000 acres, destroying nearly 7,000 structures in Pacific Palisades and Malibu. Since then, homeowners have faced delays in rebuilding and insurance payouts, fueling concerns that the state is stonewalling recovery efforts to push a new development agenda.

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Governor Gavin Newsom intensified fears last week by allocating \$101 million for future low-income housing projects in the region. Residents, already frustrated by bureaucratic hurdles, saw the funding as a signal that displaced homeowners could be pushed aside in favor of new, state-driven housing initiatives.



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Park, speaking on a local podcast, said she is deeply concerned about efforts to reshape the character of the community under the guise of recovery. She warned of "corporate developers buying out property and changing the way

your community looks and feels,” and expressed fears that the fire could be used to justify new density policies that do not align with the area’s infrastructure or evacuation safety.

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Park also criticized the lack of investment in infrastructure to support increased population density, calling the safe evacuation during the fire a “miracle.” She warned that further development in the urban-wildland interface could place residents at even greater risk.

In response to growing backlash, State Senator Ben Allen withdrew a bill Wednesday evening that would have created a “resilient rebuilding authority.” The proposed body could have used local property tax revenues to acquire burned properties, potentially repurposing them for low-income or other state-prioritized housing uses.

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While no official state plan has been confirmed to force property redistribution, Park acknowledged that some politicians may view the fire’s aftermath as an “opportunity” to pursue broader policy goals. She emphasized that any redevelopment efforts must prioritize the needs and safety of existing residents.

The situation remains tense as residents fight for the right to rebuild their homes without being displaced or overrun by politically motivated development schemes.

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