



## **Enforcement at the Hot Springs Trailhead on Red Flag Warning Days Through 2025**



Board of Supervisors,  
Office of the 1<sup>st</sup> District  
March 4, 2025

# Goal of Pilot Program

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**Reduce** wildfire ignition risks.



**Improve** community safety.



**Ensure** visitors clearly understand and comply with fire safety regulations.

# Background

- **Increases visitor traffic to area**
- **High fire risk**
  - Dry vegetation
  - Steep terrain
  - Strong sundowner winds
  - Human-caused ignition like illegal campfires
- **Historical disasters**
  - Tea Fire (2008)
  - Thomas Fire (2017)
  - Debris Flow (2018)



# Emergency Response Challenges

- Increased visitor traffic during **high fire risk days** strains emergency services.
- Narrow roads increase evacuation concerns
- Congested roads could hinder **first responders** during wildfire evacuations.



# Enforcement Gaps

- Current parking enforcement exists but is **inconsistent**.
- **Remote** location makes consistency difficult.
- **Red Flag Day** restrictions need stronger enforcement to reduce the highest fire risks.



# Fiscal Analysis

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## **\$25,000 One-Time Pilot Program Funding**

To pay for Sheriff's Office estimated overtime costs, assuming **20** Red-Flag weather days/Heavy Rainfall Events

## **From General County Programs Contingencies**

Fund balance had previously been set aside for a parking study of the trail area in 2021 that was not used.

# Recommended Actions

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## That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Direct County staff to coordinate with appropriate local, state and federal agencies, including Fire agencies and U.S. Forest Service as appropriate, to develop parking restrictions and trail closures on Red Flag Warning days through 2025 in the area of the Hot Springs Trail in the First District, and return to the Board for required approvals;
- b) Request that the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office implement enforcement measures for compliance with parking restrictions and trail closures once established;
- c) Request the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office work with the U.S. Forest Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife to implement enforcement measures following heavy rainfall on the Hot Springs Trail to prevent illegal watershed modification and unauthorized activity;
- d) Approve a Budget Revision Request No0010328 to increase appropriations of \$25,000 in the Sheriff General Fund for Salaries and Benefits from 990 fund balance for these enforcement efforts, funded on a reimbursement basis as required and approved by the County Executive Office.

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