



Katherine Douglas *General Public Comment*

From: Robert Bridges <robertbridges@me.com>
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To: sbcob
Subject: Disaster Relief

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*Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Barbara
sbcob@countyofsb.org*

October 4, 2025

Dear Board Members and Members of the Public,

The purpose of this letter is to request that the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors act to aid victims of Governor-declared disasters such as the January 2025 Palisades Fire by adopting Proposition 171, which was passed by the California Legislature in 1993 but not adopted by Santa Barbara County at that time. Adoption now would allow the Proposition 13 tax assessments qualifying victims of disasters occurring outside the County to be carried to Santa Barbara without the requirement that damaged properties be sold beforehand. This topic is of particular importance to those of us who suffered losses in the January fires who find it impossible to either rebuild or sell what remains of our homes.

My wife, Janelle, and I lost our home of 35 years, and after enduring this devastating personal experience and after a long absence, we would very much like to return to Santa Barbara. We were married at the Santa Barbara Courthouse in 1981 and lived happily in a small apartment in the city before we left so that I might attend graduate school in Los Angeles. We always intended to return, but the demands of our careers and raising a family frustrated and delayed that dream.

Santa Barbara County currently provides relief to those generally in our situation by means of Section 2.1(b) of Article XIII A of the California Constitution (Proposition 19), implemented by R&TC section 69.6 - providing for Base Year Value Transfers for disaster victims. However, one key obstacle within this provision is impossible for us to surmount: In order to take advantage of the benefit, our damaged property would need to be sold beforehand. The Pacific Palisades fire destroyed up to 6,000 homes, and it will take a considerable period of time for the market conditions to improve and for lots to be absorbed by builders or rebuilt. Our property is for sale, but we haven't received any offers

as of yet. Rebuilding is not an option due to the severely damaged infrastructure and the fact that the burn area remains generally uninhabitable.

We see the solution to our predicament in Section 2 of Article XIII A of the California Constitution (Proposition 171), implemented by R&TC section 69.3, passed in 1991, which provides for Base Year Value Transfers without the need for prior sale of the damaged property. To date, however, only 14 counties in California have adopted it (not including Santa Barbara).

It is our sincere hope that the Board of Supervisors will recognize that adoption of this readily available legislative option would provide much-needed relief and assistance to those of us who wish to recover from the disaster and rebuild our lives in Santa Barbara.

Please also know that time is of the essence, as many of us who have been affected are still searching for permanent housing.

Very Truly Yours,

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