



Engineering, Operations, & Technology Committee

Metropolitan's Emergency Response to January 2025 Wildfires

Item 6a

February 10, 2025

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Subject

Metropolitan's Emergency Response to January 2025 Wildfires

Purpose

Update the Board on Metropolitan's emergency response to the 2025 wildfires, including EOC evacuation, safety priorities, communications, operational changes, and mutual assistance.

Next Steps

Conduct Lessons Learned sessions with Metropolitan staff and member agencies. Provide updates to board and member agencies, as needed, on follow-up actions and recovery efforts.

Wildfires January 2025

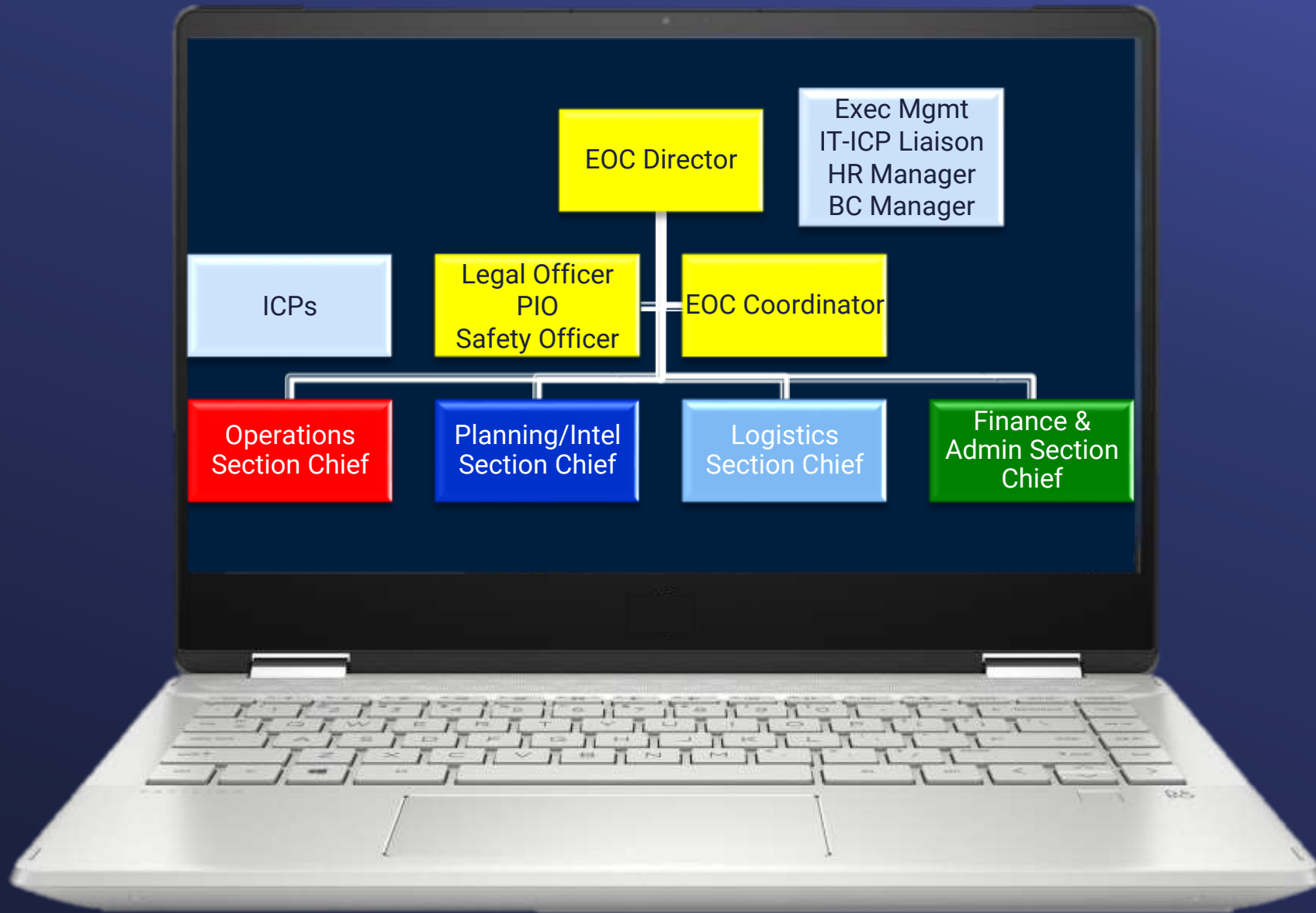


Source: CNN

Metropolitan's Emergency Response

- Activated **Emergency Operations Center Level II** and **Incident Command Posts**
- Coordinated with **first responders** and **emergency management agencies**
- Made **operational adjustments** for greater system flexibility and resilience
 - No significant impacts or damage to Metropolitan facilities
- Ensured **safety** and **water quality** through site assessments, safety bulletins, and virtual meetings
- Provided **mutual assistance** and support to impacted agencies

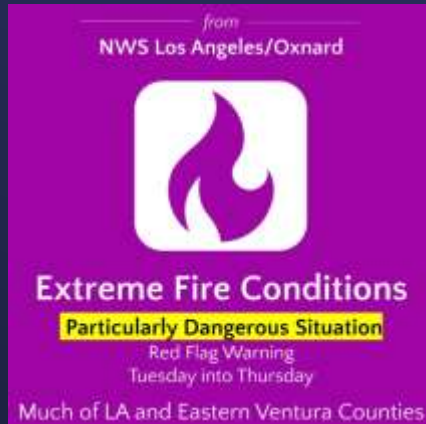
Activating the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Virtually



EOC Meeting at Field Site

Metropolitan Activated EOC in Response to Unprecedented Fire and Wind Event

- Jan. 8: Remote EOC activation to Level II (7am–7pm), Level III overnight
 - Weymouth, Jensen, and Western C&D ICPs activated
 - Agency Representative embedded in Los Angeles County EOC
- Jan. 9: Emergency response trailer and staff embedded with CalFIRE Incident Management Team for Eaton Fire ICP at Rose Bowl
- Jan. 10: Agency Representative embedded in Palisades Fire ICP
- Jan. 22: Agency Representative embedded in Hughes Fire ICP



Los Angeles NWS issues Particularly Dangerous Situation Red Flag Warning on 1/6 for 1/7-1/9



Kyle Grillot—Bloomberg/Getty Images

Palisades Fire (23,500 acres) starts 1/7 10:30 AM, explodes rapidly, toward Sepulveda PCS by 1/10



Josh Edelson—AFP/Getty Images

Eaton Fire (14,000 acres) starts 1/7 6:18 PM; explodes rapidly, toward Eagle Rock Operations Control Center and Security Water Center



Ruben Granados—Metropolitan C&D

Hurst Fire (800 acres) starts near Jensen 1/7 10:29 PM



Ruben Granados—Metropolitan C&D

Hughes Fire (10,000 acres) starts near Castaic Lake 1/22 10:53 AM

Safety First

Prioritizing Safety



- Relocated Eagle Rock staff to backup OCC at La Verne and Union Station 1/7 – 1/12
- Conducted indoor air quality monitoring to support decisions for remote board meetings and remote work the week of 1/13
- Published several Safety Talks on wildfire smoke and situational awareness for use by Metropolitan employees

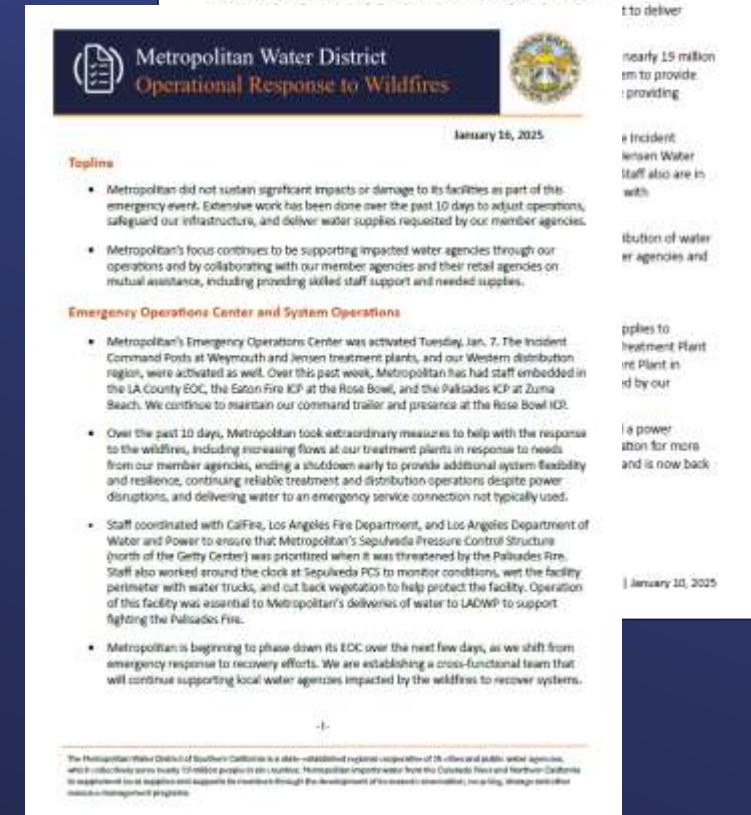
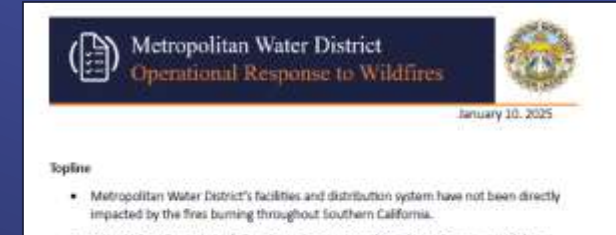


Board, Member Agency, and Employee Communications

Frequent and Effective Communications



- Daily EOC Situation Reports
- GM memos
- HR memos
- MetAlerts
- Safety Talks
- Media support for MWD and member agencies





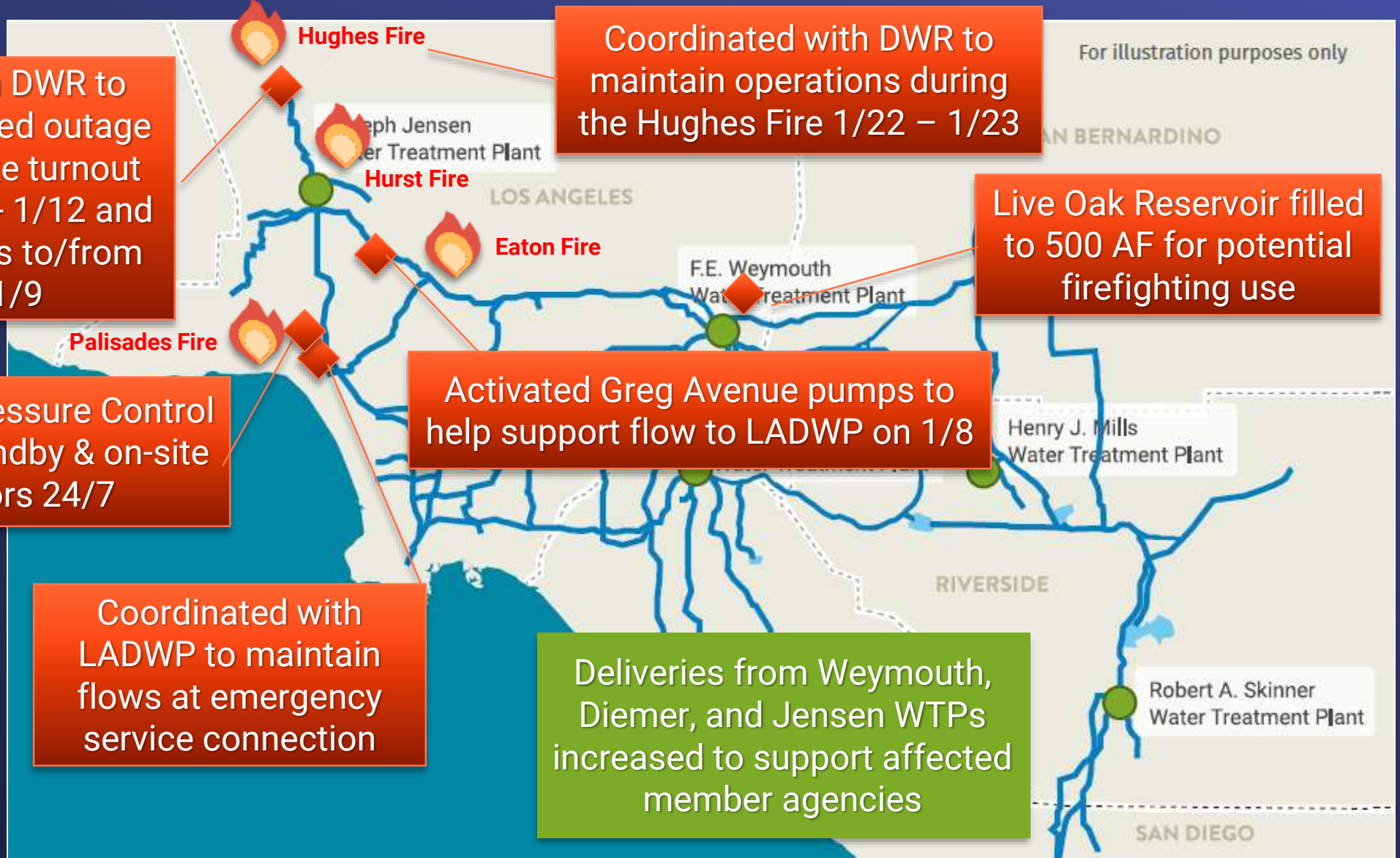
Employee Assistance

For Employees Evacuated (23) or Home Destroyed (3)

HR and Unions Provide Assistance to Impacted Employees

- Compensation for up to 14 days for short-term lodging
- Fully paid temporary housing through hotel or Airbnb (provided by AFSCME)
- Paid administrative leave for impacted employees
- Catastrophic leave donation program
- Employee donations and lodging assistance

Operational Changes in Response to Wildfires



Coordinated with DWR to accelerate a planned outage at the Castaic Lake turnout scheduled for 1/6 - 1/12 and resumed deliveries to/from Jensen on 1/9

Coordinated with DWR to maintain operations during the Hughes Fire 1/22 - 1/23

Live Oak Reservoir filled to 500 AF for potential firefighting use

Sepulveda Pressure Control Structure standby & on-site operators 24/7

Activated Greg Avenue pumps to help support flow to LADWP on 1/8

Coordinated with LADWP to maintain flows at emergency service connection

Deliveries from Weymouth, Diemer, and Jensen WTPs increased to support affected member agencies

Several operational changes made to increase system flexibility and resilience

System Operations



Other Operational Adjustments

- Skinner, Sepulveda Canyon PCS, Foothill PCS, and San Dimas PCS ran on emergency generators due to PSPS outages
- Skinner and Weymouth temporarily switched from ozone to chlorine as primary disinfectant to ensure reliable operations during PSPS events
- Staff ensured facilities had enough diesel fuel for generators and water treatment chemicals

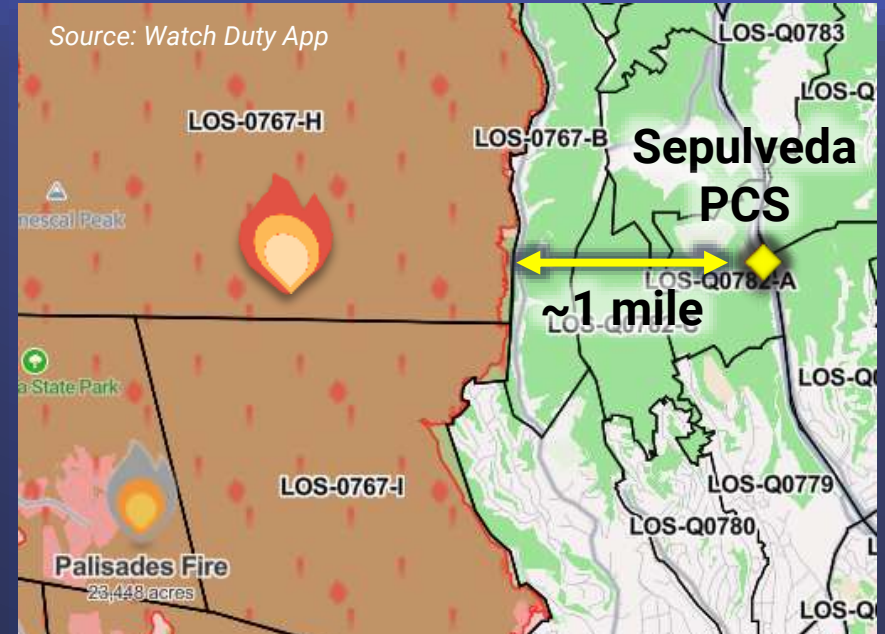
Protecting Sepulveda Canyon Pressure Control Structure

On-site presence to monitor conditions and maintain operations

Facility ran on emergency generator from 1/10 through 1/12



View of Palisades Fire from Sepulveda PCS



Fire reached a mile west of Sepulveda PCS



Wetted facility perimeter for fire protection



Cleared vegetation for defensible space

LA Times: 12 hours of fire that decimated Altadena

It may take months, or even years, to fully understand why the Eaton fire was so devastating. However, an extensive review of firefighter radio transmissions and interviews by The Times offer a horrifying view of how the fire spread over a period of hours, and the life-or-death decisions that firefighters, law enforcement officers and emergency personnel on the ground had to face.

The review found:

- The fire immediately threatened hillside homes around Eaton Canyon. Firefighters got to the scene quickly and saved homes, but winds were by then pushing flames and embers west toward the heart of Altadena.
- As the blaze grew, firefighting resources were no match. Aircraft were grounded almost immediately amid intense wind, and fire operations became more about saving lives than protecting structures.
- Embers traveled up to two miles to the west, passing over some neighborhoods but hitting central Altadena hard. Within hours, entire blocks were on fire.
- Early Wednesday, fire officials realized mass evacuations were the only answer. With that, a sickening possibility set in: “I’m going to lose half of my town,” Pasadena Fire Chief Chad Augustin recalled.

<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2025-01-17/chaotic-first-hours-eaton-fire-timeline-maps>



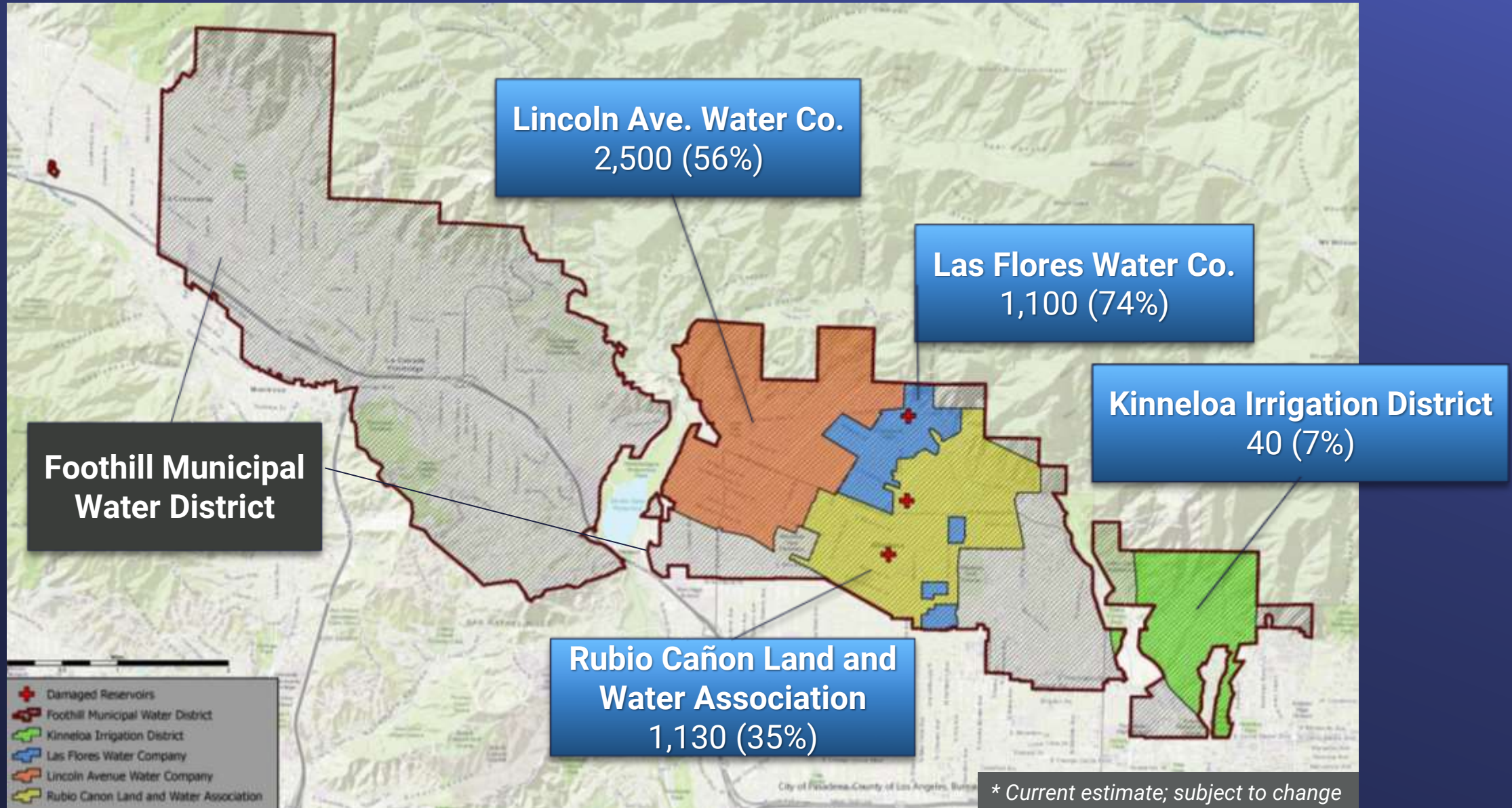
Support Foothill MWD, Pasadena Water and Power, and Impacted Water Utilities

Eaton Fire Incident Emergency Response

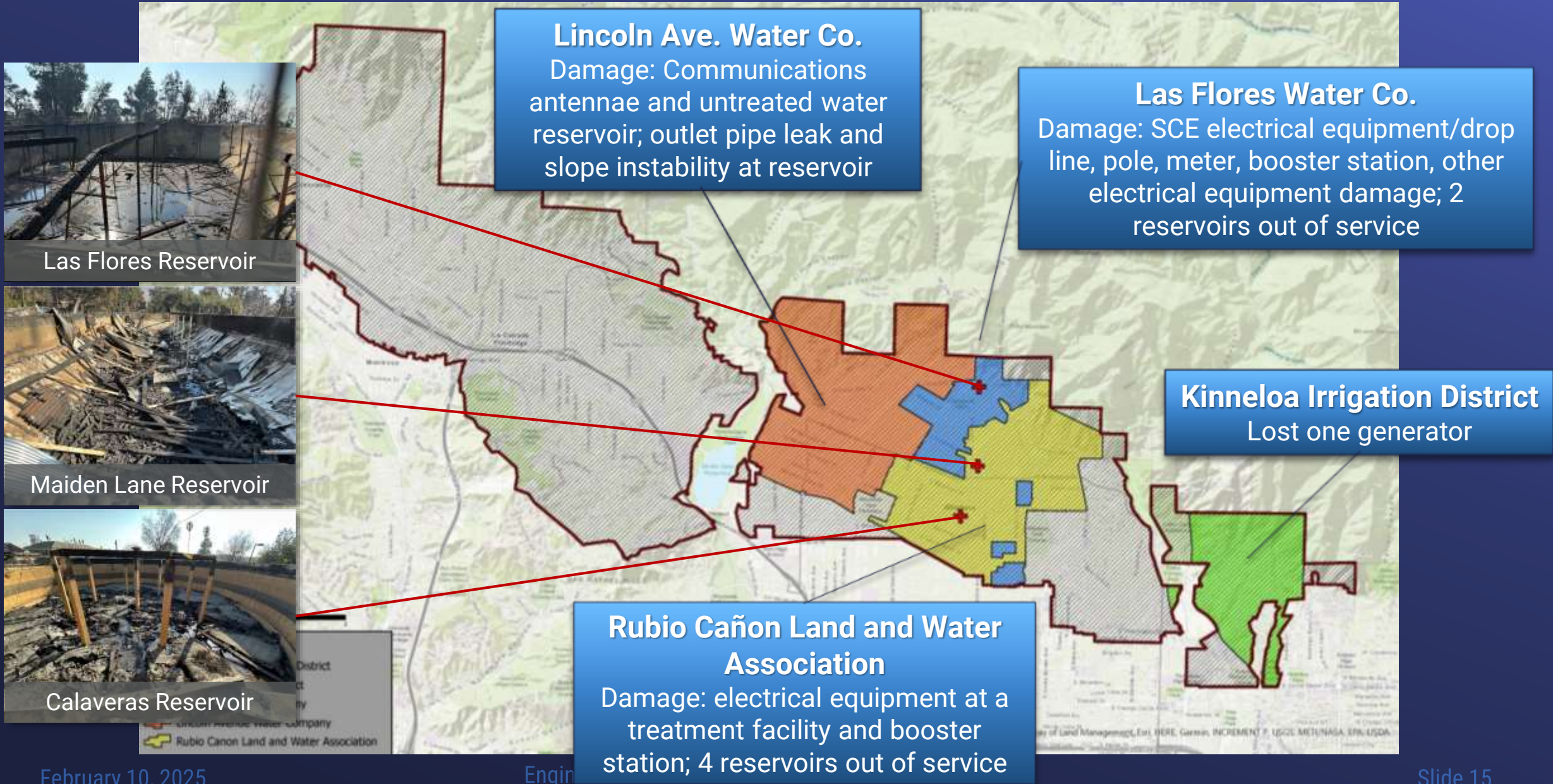


- Immediate assessment and resource deployment (e.g., standby generator support, fuel, pumps)
- Embed in CalFIRE Incident Management Team along with CUEA
- Assist with supporting Foothill MWD emergency management function
 - Planning and logistics support
 - Operations support (e.g., initial damage assessments)

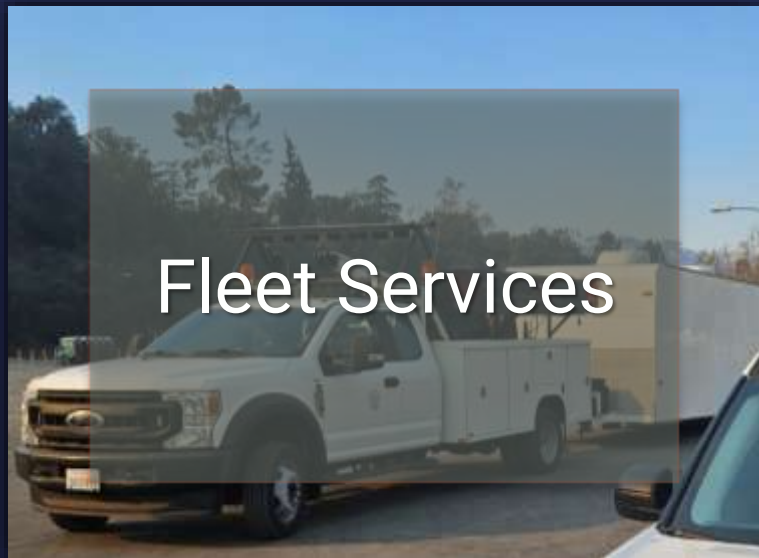
Four Impacted Water Utilities – Connections Lost (% Total) *



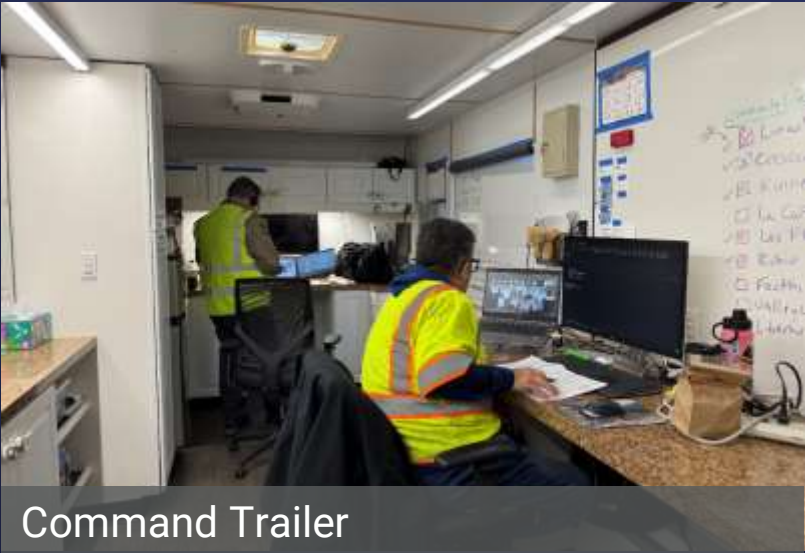
Initial Damage Assessment – Critical Infrastructure Lost



Six Mutual Assistance Missions



Coordination of Mutual Assistance for Impacted Water Utilities at Eaton Fire Incident Command Post (Rose Bowl)



Mutual Assistance for Impacted Water Utilities



Rainbow MWD operations team



MWD planning/logistics support



MWD ops support at FMWD Pump Station



FMWD ICP water utility coordination



Water utility coordination at Eaton Fire ICP at Rose Bowl

Provided Equipment and Supplies to Impacted Water Utilities: Operations

Mutual Assistance



1,000-gal fuel tank for standby generator support

- Provided generators, fuel, pumps, tanks, valves
- Deployed skilled electricians and mechanics to help with response & recovery
- Delivered additional supplies and resources

Provided Assistance to Impacted Water Utilities: Operations

Mutual Assistance



Metropolitan staff helped establish a temporary water truck refilling station at Foothill Municipal Water District's pump station near the Rose Bowl

Provided Technical Services to Impacted Water Utilities: Planning and Logistics

Mutual Assistance

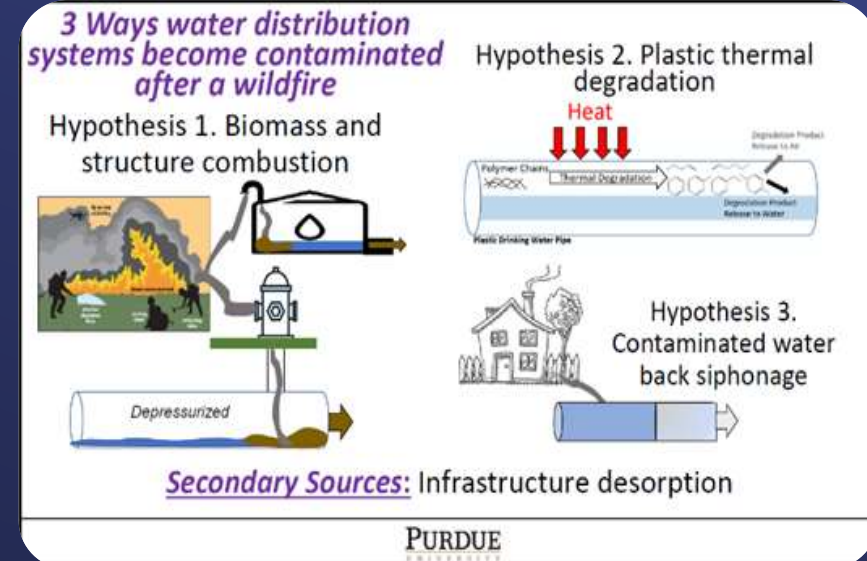
- Initial damage assessments
- Provided GIS mapping services
- Assisted with developing fire smoke decontamination plan for office buildings
- Supported design and construction of a temporary pressure reducing valve station



Agency office decontamination

Water Quality Technical Assistance

- Arranged virtual forum with water system recovery expert, impacted member and retail agencies, and Division of Drinking Water
- Surveyed regional contract labs to ensure sufficient sample analysis capacity
- Follow-up meetings to continue sharing information and best practices
- Planning and logistics support for impacted water utilities for return-to-service



Mutual Assistance



Outstanding Mutual Assistance Response

- Public Water Agencies Group (PWAG)
 - Additional crews to support impacted water utilities
 - Equipment (pumps, generators)
- California Water Agency Response Network (CalWARN)
 - Pump crews and equipment (Calleguas MWD, Rainbow WD, Corona Water Dept.)
- California Utilities Emergency Association (CUEA)
 - Coordination among responding utilities (e.g., getting power circuits to support booster stations prioritized for repair)

Four Phases of Emergency Management

