

## Testimony of John Alle

Before the United States Senate Special Committee on Aging

November 13, 2025

I was the last person to speak with LA Mayor Karen Bass before she departed for Ghana on January 4, 2025. She called me and spoke in hushed tones and informed me she was "boarding the plane."

We discussed predicted winds.

We discussed the possibility of fire from nightly 18" ankle height meth fires and 5' high fires transient addicts use to stay warm. We discussed how flying embers could destroy that commercial district in minutes.

We discussed her leaving LA without a Deputy Mayor in place in charge of 'Homeland Security' (the city's fire, police, and airport security). Deputy Mayor Brian Williams was on paid leave while the FBI investigated his reporting of false bomb threats at LA's City Hall. Even LA Police Chief Jim McDonnell told me he was not aware that Deputy Mayor Brian Williams was on "paid leave."

She seemed intent on leaving LA, became angry, and was personally threatening when I raised concerns. She told me she "would miss just 2 work days." I responded by stating she'd be away a minimum of 5 days, that being mayor of the nation's 2nd largest city was a 24-7 job, and that Saturdays and Sundays counted.

Upon her return after Pacific Palisades burned and my family lost their homes, I continued texting Karen Bass (and leaving voicemail messages) about the pending dangers. She never returned my calls or responded to my text messages again.

I arrived 2 miles away in the Palisades at my 98 and 96-year-old parents' house at about 4 PM and evacuated them at about 5 PM. Within just a few hours, blue skies with smoke miles away turned the sky into darkness.

There was no 'evacuation notice' or knock on the door or by phone from LAPD or LAFD. I made the decision to evacuate and gather their prescription medicines, some money, a wallet, and a day's supply of clothes.

The only offer of help was a phone call from the Ronald Reagan American Legion Palisades Post at about 4:20 PM, advising us there was a fire nearby and offering help.

There were no police cars or firetrucks seen or heard as we left.

Pacific Coast Highway was clogged and traffic was not moving, and full of stationary fire trucks and fire fighters. I turned and exited the Palisades via Sunset Blvd. Large 2-foot fire cinders flew.

My parents were traumatized. My Mom became confused and remained so until she died 7 months later. Many of hers and my Dad's contemporaries and friends also died shortly following the fire of natural causes. I do not believe in coincidences. Their depression, confusion, forced relocation and angst had lots to do with their dying.

I returned the very next morning on June 8, 2025 with a friend and have done so every day since. Less than 10 hours following moving my parents to temporary housing, my friend and I returned, parked miles away, and walked back into the Palisades from Sunset and Allenford, to Hartzel Street and then Alma Real Drive.

Home structures in the Riviera area, Will Rogers area, and Alphabet streets and buildings in the commercial district were burned and destroyed, still burning or smoldering. There were no firefighters. Brand new fire roads for fire trucks in Potrero Canyon in the Huntington area of the Palisades, connecting PCH to the Recreation Center, were not used. Portions of the canyon park smoldered for days after. Fire crews did not return to canyon areas to dig below the ground surface and completely extinguish small flames. Out-of-state fire crews there to assist described to us "slumber fires" that were extinguished at ground level, but remained active below the surface, even through a winter 6-foot snow pack, and would reignite the following spring and summer in the very same places when the weather became dry.

On the following days we returned there were abandoned and damaged fire hoses and clamps left behind. We saw they were not used and not connected to hydrants.

Fire hydrants were dry but streets were flooded by water from homes gushing from water lines inside where sinks and showers once were, and exterior garden connections. The flooding continued for days.

For 4 days, open flames from gas turn-offs where stoves and fireplaces once stood continued to burn about 4 to 6 feet high.

For 7 days following the fire we saw only crews and trucks from other California cities, Mexico and from out-of-state. *Interestingly, a lime-colored fire truck with the words alluding to the "Governor's (Newsom) Fleet" remained parked in the driveway of one of his supporters on Chautauqua where Almoloya Drive ends. Crews from that truck stayed even as other homes burned. Crews removed fallen trees and branches leaning against the existing 2-story house.*

We freely accessed the areas burned by motor scooters we rented in Santa Monica. We were never stopped and were able to ride around Police and check points by simply waving and saying hello.

Firefighters never accessed newly constructed roads dedicated for fire emergencies and access. In the Huntington and Via de las Olas areas, also along the rim of the Recreation Center to the ocean at Pacific Coast Highway, homes on Alma Real and DePauw were consumed by flames on both sides.

Stating they were unable to stop the spread of fire, we were told by out-of-state and fire crews that the city "drew a line in the sand" and set up lines in the lower Huntington area to stop the fire from spreading into the adjacent Rustic Canyon section and City of Santa Monica. That's why some homes in the lower Huntington were spared, but still damaged by smoke and ash. Active crews finally moved in.

We saw 1 gasoline canister left alongside the burned hillside of Chautauqua Blvd, leading to PCH. We informed a nearby fire truck and were told to report it to Fire Station 69. When we went to Station 69 we were told to take the cannister to LA County near Leo Carrillo Beach where the arson division was located. Another similar incident was shown on video by a driver behind 2 days later. The back portions of those homes burned.

I have five (5) older family members who have resided in Pacific Palisades for years prior to losing their home in the firestorm. Property owners may or may not build/rebuild. Pending and current state and city regulations, elected and appointed city and county officials who are financially compromised, and insurance, are real reasons for delay.

The City has paused, not waived permit fees for homes with the very same plans. So for a 2,800 to 3,000 square foot home the permit fees range from \$60,000 to \$80,000.

Many streets in the Palisades were serviced by dangerous overhead electrical lines. Until public outcry, neither the Governor nor Mayor thought the City or Department of Water and Power should fund the cost of moving these lines below ground.

Every elementary, middle and high school in the Palisades burned or was destroyed. Every synagogue and church in the Palisades was burned or destroyed.