



JOEL ANDERSON
SUPERVISOR, SECOND DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: September 30, 2025

05

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

ADOPT A RESOLUTION TO WAIVE FEES FOR THE REBUILDING OF LEGAL STRUCTURES, DEBRIS DISPOSAL, AND REPLACEMENT OF DOCUMENTS DAMAGED OR DESTROYED BY THE SEPTEMBER 2025 COCHES FIRE (DISTRICT: 2)

OVERVIEW

On September 8, 2025, a vegetation fire ignited in the community of Lakeside near Coches Road and quickly spread into the surrounding area. The Coches Fire burned approximately five acres and resulted in evacuations in nearby neighborhoods, displacing residents across the community. According to damage assessment reports, at least ten structures were destroyed, including homes, mobile homes, and travel trailers, and several more were damaged. The fire disproportionately impacted a population of older adults, many of whom were displaced from their homes and are now beginning the process of recovery and rebuilding.

Today's actions to waive fees will assist property owners impacted by the Coches Fire by formally declaring the damaged area eligible for plan check, debris disposal, and permit fee waivers. Fee relief will apply to legal structures that were destroyed or damaged, as well as to unpermitted improvements that may be legally rebuilt. This includes septic systems and water wells that may have been damaged. Further, the actions will reduce costs for disposing of fire debris and will waive Assessor/Recorder/County Clerk's fees for the issuance of vital records such as birth certificates, death certificates, and marriage certificates and reproduction of property-related or business documents.

RECOMMENDATION(S)
SUPERVISOR JOEL ANDERSON

1. Waive Board Policy B-29, Fees, Grants and Revenue Contracts, Department Responsibility for Full Cost Recovery to waive the plan check review and permit fees related to the rebuilding of legal structures of like size and location, including septic systems and water wells, in the unincorporated area that were damaged or destroyed by the September 2025 Coches Fire. Fee waivers would also apply to structures being rebuilt that

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were damaged or destroyed that may not have been permitted but can be legally rebuilt with permits.

2. Waive Board Policy B-29, Fees, Grants and Revenue Contracts, Department Responsibility for Full Cost Recovery to waive the Department of Public Works Solid Waste Management Agreement fee and Solid Waste Planning fee for disposing of fire debris from the September 2025 Coches Fire.
3. Waive Board Policy B-29, Fees, Grants and Revenue Contracts, Department Responsibility for Full Cost Recovery and grant the Assessor/Recorder/County Clerk's Office the authority to issue copies of vital records as well as replacement deeds and other property-related or business documents at no cost for those impacted by the September 2025 Coches Fire.
4. Waive the Assessor/Recorder/County Clerk's portion of fees collected pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 103625 for fees collected for vital records, and grant the Assessor/Recorder/County Clerk's Office the authority to issue replacements of these documents free of charge for local residents who have lost their documents as a result of the September 2025 Coches Fire.
5. Adopt a resolution entitled "A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS DECLARING THE REBUILDING OF LEGAL STRUCTURES IN THE UNINCORPORATED AREA THAT WERE DAMAGED OR DESTROYED IN THE SEPTEMBER 2025 COCHES FIRE TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR PLAN CHECK, DEBRIS DISPOSAL, AND PERMIT FEE WAIVERS, AND TO SUPPORT VICTIMS IN RECOVERING THEIR VITAL RECORDS, DEEDS AND OTHER PROPERTY-RELATED AND BUSINESS DOCUMENTS."

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Wildfires can cause lasting disruptions to individuals and families, particularly those in vulnerable and underserved communities. Many residents affected by the September 2025 Coches Fire face economic hardship and live on limited incomes. By waiving plan check review and permit fees for rebuilding homes, debris disposal fees, as well as fees for the replacement of vital records such as birth, death, and marriage certificates, and property-related and business documents, today's action directly supports equitable recovery. These measures remove financial barriers that could otherwise delay or prevent families from restoring stable housing and recovering essential documentation, thereby reducing the risk of displacement and further hardship. Collectively, these fee waivers are a critical step in ensuring that all impacted residents have an opportunity to rebuild their lives and remain in their communities.

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SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Today's proposed actions support the County of San Diego's Sustainability Goals by encouraging responsible rebuilding of structures and infrastructure. By removing financial barriers for replacement of documents and safe home reconstruction, the actions promote equitable access to essential government services for vulnerable populations. These measures help strengthen resilient, sustainable communities by accelerating recovery, minimizing long-term economic and environmental impacts for those affected by the September 2025 Coches Fire.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funds for the actions requested in Recommendation 1 are included in the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Operational Plan. If approved, the waiver of plan check and permit fees associated with rebuilding damaged and destroyed homes is anticipated to be funded by existing wildfire fee waiver funding to offset costs and revenue losses, the amount of which is unknown at this time. The funding source is existing one-time General Fund fund balance in Planning & Development Services and Department of Environmental Health and Quality. There will be no additional staff years.

Funds for the actions requested in Recommendation 2 are included in the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Operational Plan. If approved, the waiver of debris disposal fees associated with damaged and destroyed homes is anticipated to be covered by existing funds in the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Operational Plan for the Department of Public Works. The funding source will be existing General Purpose Revenue. There will be no increase in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

Funds for the actions requested in Recommendation 3 and 4 are included in the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Operational Plan. If approved, the waiver of Assessor/Recorder/County Clerk fees for vital records and property-related documents will reduce revenues by an unknown amount at this time. Statutory fees for birth, death, and marriage certificates remitted to the State will be covered by existing funds in the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Operational Plan for the Assessor/Recorder/County Clerk. The funding source will be existing General Purpose Revenue. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

There is no fiscal impact associated with Recommendation 5. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

On September 8, 2025, a vegetation fire ignited in the community of Lakeside near Coches Road and quickly spread into the surrounding area. The Coches Fire burned approximately five acres

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and resulted in evacuations in nearby neighborhoods, displacing residents across the community. Damage assessment reports indicate that at least ten structures were destroyed, including homes, mobile homes, and travel trailers, and several more damaged. The fire disproportionately impacted a population of older adults, many of whom were displaced from their homes and are now beginning the process of recovery and rebuilding.

To support victims affected by the September 2025 Coches Fire who lost their documents, the Assessor/Recorder/County Clerk will waive fees for replacement of vital records, deeds, and other property-related and business documents. This board letter would waive full cost recovery and allow for the Assessor/Recorder/County Clerk's Office to issue replacement of these documents at no cost to local residents impacted by the September 2025 Coches Fire.

To assist property owners who lost legal structures in this wildfire and those who may have had unpermitted structures or improvements that were impacted by the fire that could be permitted through rebuilding, with rebuilding their lives, this board letter will formally declare the area damaged by the September 2025 Coches Fires and make the property owners affected by this disaster eligible for plan check review and permit fee waivers set forth in the County Administrative Code, Section 362.1 (d), Item 17, Section 362.2 (c), Item 1 and San Diego County Code of Regulatory Ordinance Section 65.107(m)(9).

Additionally, to assist property owners that sustained damage to their homes, the Department of Public Works will waive the Solid Waste Management Agreement fee and Solid Waste Planning fee. Waiver of these fees will help reduce costs for disposing of fire debris.

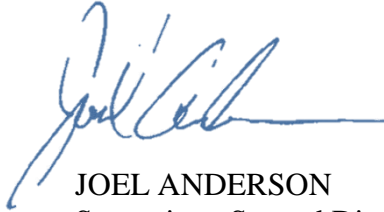
This recent event is yet another reminder of the constant threat and danger this region faces when it comes to wildfires. Today's actions will expand on County efforts by helping individual property owners with plan check and permit fee waivers in order to remove financial barriers that could otherwise delay or prevent families from restoring stable housing and recovering essential documentation, thereby reducing the risk of displacement and further hardship.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's proposed actions support the Strategic Initiative of Sustainability in the County of San Diego's 2025-2030 Strategic Plan by ensuring the region's ability to recover by removing financial barriers, particularly for older adults and those on limited incomes, while ensuring the safe design and construction of homes and community structures as they rebuild.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Joel Anderson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

JOEL ANDERSON
Supervisor, Second District

ATTACHMENT(S)

Attachment A – A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS DECLARING THE REBUILDING OF LEGAL STRUCTURES IN THE UNINCORPORATED AREA THAT WERE DAMAGED OR DESTROYED IN THE SEPTEMBER 2025 COCHES FIRE TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR PLAN CHECK, DEBRIS DISPOSAL, AND PERMIT FEE WAIVERS, AND TO SUPPORT VICTIMS IN RECOVERING THEIR VITAL RECORDS, DEEDS, AND OTHER PROPERTY-RELATED AND BUSINESS DOCUMENTS