

As Southern California fires expand, President Trump announces plan to visit Los Angeles

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Early Tuesday morning, multiple wildfires ignited in San Diego County, driven by strong Santa Ana winds and critically dry conditions. The most significant of these so far is the Lilac Fire, is 50 percent contained as of publication, which started in the Bonsall area and has rapidly expanded to approximately 80 acres. Evacuation orders have been issued for residents south of Pala Mesa and west of Interstate 15, as the fire threatens homes and businesses.

Shortly after the Lilac Fire, another blaze, the Pala Fire, ignited and has scorched around 30 acres. Evacuation orders were also issued, with several structures still at risk. As of this writing, firefighters have managed to contain the Pala Fire as well as the Riverview Fire in Fallbrook after it consumed approximately one acre, while the smaller Friars Fire has erupted on Tuesday, prompting immediate evacuation orders.

The National Weather Service issued an Extreme Fire Weather Warning Tuesday due to anticipated wind gusts up to 100 mph in mountainous areas and up to 70 mph in coastal regions. Life-threatening conditions for rapid fire spread still persist across Southern California.

In Los Angeles, despite the valiant efforts of firefighters, full containment remains difficult: after nearly two weeks, the Palisades Fire is 63 percent contained, while containment of the Eaton Fire stands at 89 percent.

Thousands have been left homeless, with entire neighborhoods in Pacific Palisades and Altadena erased by the flames. Federal aid is limited and has been slow in coming. Many residents now confront the prospect of rebuilding their homes with entirely inadequate insurance or finding new housing in one of the most expensive regions in the country.

In the face of this ongoing catastrophe, President Donald Trump's announcement of a visit on January 24 to the areas devastated by the fire is nothing short of hypocritical. During his 2025 inauguration, Trump offered hollow sympathies to wildfire victims, yet his policies and initial

executive orders starkly contradict any genuine concern for the victims or the environment.

Trump's record on natural disasters is criminal. His handling of hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017 was characterized by disregard for human life, cruel indifference and the prioritization of financial concerns over humanitarian needs. At the time, Trump complained about the cost of recovery efforts, threatening to terminate federal aid to Puerto Rico.

A 2021 report by the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of the Inspector General titled "Review of HUD's Disbursement of Grant Funds Appropriated for Disaster Recovery and Mitigation Activities in Puerto Rico" found that the Trump administration "unnecessarily delayed" more than \$20 billion in hurricane relief aid for the US island territory.

His previous administration's withdrawal of the United States from the Paris climate agreement rejected even those minimal global efforts to combat climate change, even as climate-related disasters, such as the severe wildfires in California, become more frequent and devastating. Trump has once again pulled the US out of the Paris agreement in an executive order signed Monday night.

The slogan "Drill, baby, drill" used by Trump during his inauguration speech is nothing new: his first administration made every effort to repeal whatever environmental regulation was left from the last few decades, removing any restraint to capitalist exploitation. In 2017, he began the process of dismantling the Clean Power Plan, which set limits on carbon emissions from power plants, particularly those using coal.

In 2018, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under Trump proposed shredding rules that restricted methane emissions from oil and gas operations, potentially increasing the release of this potent greenhouse gas.

Trump ended funding for NASA's Carbon Monitoring System, which was instrumental in tracking carbon dioxide

and methane emissions, thereby hobbling efforts to monitor greenhouse gases effectively. He also disbanded the Interagency Working Group on Social Cost of Greenhouse Gases and significantly lowered the estimated cost of carbon emissions from \$51 to \$7 per ton, affecting the evaluation of climate-related regulations.

All of these destructive measures in his first term were gifts to the billionaires and his second administration will be no different.

Trump's executive order halting offshore wind lease sales and pausing permits for onshore and offshore wind projects—which he announced on inauguration day—also reveals a blatant disregard for the environmental consequences, hampering any progress toward sustainable energy and also reinforcing the administration's commitment to fossil fuels, therefore exacerbating the very conditions that lead to catastrophic wildfires.

President Trump's planned visit to Los Angeles on Friday is a cynical gesture devoid of any genuine intent to address the root causes of the crisis. His administration's record, its consistent denial of climate science and rollback of environmental protections have directly contributed to the conditions fostering these disasters.

Adding to the crisis is the revealing response of California Democrats, whose actions lay bare their own opportunistic and anti-working-class agenda. As Trump announced his hypocritical visit to the areas devastated by the fires, California Governor Gavin Newsom wasted no time to express his priorities: “finding common ground and striving toward shared goals” with the Trump administration.

Trump has repeatedly mocked Newsom by nicknaming him “Newscum,” yet the Governor is rolling out the red carpet for Trump's visit, exposing his political complicity: “This moment underscores the critical need for partnership, a shared commitment to facts, and mutual respect,” Newsom said in a tweet. “I look forward to President Trump's visit to Los Angeles...” This willingness to align with a fascist whose actions have directly contributed to the current crisis underscores the bipartisan failure and refusal to address the root causes of these disasters.

Moreover, rebuilding after the fires will present a lucrative opportunity for the ruling class, as real estate developers and speculators already circling Los Angeles prepare to exploit the suffering of tens of thousands in order to reap enormous profits from reconstruction projects. The exploitation of immigrant labor in that sector, which can be employed at minimal cost, ensures these profits are maximized. The Democrats' rhetoric of concern masks their role in perpetuating the exploitation of workers to serve the interests of capital.

While falsely posing as champions of immigrant rights

under the guise of “humanitarian concern,” the Democrats' interest is narrowly focused on how Trump's deportation of millions of immigrant workers will impact the rebuilding efforts.

The reality is that politicians like Newsom do not advocate for expanding genuine democratic rights to immigrants. Instead, their primary concern is how to maintain the profit machine, ensuring a steady supply of cheap labor to support the construction industry and other sectors vital to California's economy. The record of the Biden administration in deportations has reached levels not seen in a decade, exceeding the highest annual deportation figures of the previous Trump administration.

Both major parties in the United States are deeply committed to the preservation of a system that prioritizes profits over human lives and environmental protection. While Democrats falsely posture as allies of the working class, their policies and priorities reveal their true allegiance to Wall Street and political partnership with the Republicans.

The expansion of wildfires into urban areas like Los Angeles and San Diego highlights a terrifying reality: virtually any city on Earth can now burn. As author John Vaillant points out, the combination of climate change and unregulated urban sprawl has created conditions where wildfires can ignite and spread with unprecedented ferocity, putting countless lives and properties at risk. This devastating new normal is a direct consequence of decades of unregulated real estate development and denial of climate science.

The current wildfire crisis serves as a stark reminder that the consequences of climate inaction are not a distant threat but a present danger. Both big business parties are accountable for policies that endanger the environment and, by extension, human life. The time for complacency is over. As “Führer” Trump takes command, the working class is the only social force capable of fighting against fascism and overcoming the profit-driven system that treats environmental disasters as opportunities for exploitation. Only through a genuine socialist program that prioritizes the needs of people and the planet over corporate gains can humanity hope to avert future catastrophes.



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