RE: Request for Comprehensive Indoor Air Quality Testing Prior to Re-Occupancy of Palisades Charter High School

January 21, 2026

To Whom it May Concern:

We are writing this letter to express our concerns regarding the indoor air quality deficiencies identified at Palisades Charter High School. While we acknowledge and appreciate that LAUSD conducted substantive testing for metals and asbestos, the thoroughness of that effort stands in stark contrast to the limited air testing—particularly for volatile organic compounds (VOCs)—performed at the campus.

Although the school conducted testing for certain "wildfire-related" VOCs, naphthalene was the only carcinogenic analyte included. LAUSD did not investigate or test for other carcinogenic VOCs commonly evaluated in commercial or industrial indoor air quality assessments, such as benzene, carbon tetrachloride, and perchloroethylene (PCE) or tetrachloroethylene (TCE). Notably, some of these compounds have been detected in nearby buildings within the Palisades area, including facilities evaluated by Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation. An ongoing study by Purdue University, reviewing home testing reports, has also noted these chemicals detected in standing homes impacted by the Palisades Fire.

Furthermore, as noted in the final paragraph of Section 3.3.4 of the January 16, 2026 report, the consultants employed a 72-hour air flush period to introduce outdoor air but did not follow it with a 72-hour "normalization" period. This step is standard practice in commercial testing protocols to accurately assess the persistence and reservoir effects of VOCs within indoor materials and furnishings.

Had LAUSD employed a comprehensive testing protocol—including a full VOC panel and a proper post-flush normalization period—it is possible that additional compounds may have been identified. Without this level of rigor, the potential for ongoing exposure to harmful substances cannot be fully ruled out.

We therefore urge LAUSD to take its testing protocol to the "last mile" and complete a full and proper investigation by incorporating the following actions ***prior to re-occupying the campus***:

1. **Conduct testing for a full spectrum of relevant VOCs**, with particular focus on known carcinogenic compounds such as benzene, carbon tetrachloride, PCE/TCE, vinyl chloride, and others.
    - The EPA TO-15 full-panel 24-Hr test (or an equivalent full-panel method) with appropriate detection limits for residential screening levels should be utilized.
    - We note that certain non-carcinogenic VOCs—such as acetone, ethanol, and propanol—can still cause significant irritation, neurological symptoms, and other long term effects and therefore should be included.

2. **Implement an air flush protocol that includes a 72-hour normalization period** prior to conducting VOC sampling, as is standard in commercial indoor air quality assessments.
3. **If exceedances of residential screening levels are identified**, a Health and Human Risk Assessment (HHRA) should be conducted to determine potential impacts to building occupants.

Until the full scope of potential indoor air contaminants is properly identified and assessed, it is imperative that the safety of teachers, students, and staff remain the highest priority.

Completion of this final step by LAUSD would not only help ensure the safety of the Palisades High community but would also establish a **best-in-class model** for post-wildfire pre and post remediation assessments. Such a protocol could serve as a valuable template for school districts nationwide and globally—particularly those located in the Wildland Urban Interface—to guide future post-fire testing and remediation efforts.

Respectfully,

Signatories

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