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February 3, 2025

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## **EPA Palisades Fire Hazardous Waste Staging Site**

The Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains (RCDSMM) has been made aware that a portion of lower Topanga State Park associated with the Topanga Ranch Motel and Topanga Lagoon is being used as a short-term hazardous waste processing site for properties affected by the Palisades Fire. We recognize the importance of swift post-fire response to enable our community to recover and heal from the wildfire destruction.

As a local agency facilitating resource protection and public connections with the environment in the Santa Monica Mountains, the RCDSMM has concerns regarding the chosen site and would have preferred a different location. Critical habitat for the endangered steelhead trout and tidewater goby is located directly adjacent to the motel site within Topanga Creek and Lagoon and is at risk if contaminated materials are inadvertently spread into these areas. Adjacent beaches and near-shore areas located just downstream could also be harmed, degrading recreation uses and unique fish and wildlife habitats.

It is vital that appropriate best management practices specific to the materials that may come onto the site be put in place immediately, monitored daily, and immediately repaired or improved as needed. Coordination with the adjacent public and private landowners and regulatory agencies with technical expertise on these adjacent sensitive resources is needed to protect this unique area.

We recognize everyone's Herculean efforts to get through these trying times, but we urge caution and thoughtfulness, so we do not irreparably damage some of our most precious spaces and resources.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact the RCDSMM at [PalisadesFireInfo@rcdsmm.org](mailto:PalisadesFireInfo@rcdsmm.org)