

20 reasons for the fires in Palisades and Eaton (Los Angeles) - climate change is not one of them

(Dr.-Ing. Bernd Fleischmann, January 21, 2025)

1. Vegetation growth and drying out

- **Above-average rainfall:** In the last two years, increased rainfall has led to strong vegetation growth.
- **Seasonal drying out:** In Southern California, it does not rain in the summer. As temperatures rose and the dry season began, the vegetation became highly flammable material. Winter rainfall can start very late, as it is now.

This is not climate change, but natural variability: Annual precipitation in LA has varied by a factor of 7 since records began in 1877. The three-year periods with the lowest precipitation in Los Angeles were 1897 to 1900 and 1958 to 1961.

Source: <http://www.laalmanac.com/weather/we13.php>

2. Santa Ana Winds

- **Low humidity and high temperatures:** These foehn winds dry out vegetation quickly, making it highly flammable.
- **High wind speeds:** The winds help spread flames and sparks quickly over large areas, intensifying the fires.

3. Electrical infrastructure failure

- **Power line sparks:** Damage to power lines or faulty equipment may have contributed to the fires igniting.
- **Historical pattern:** Similar fires caused by problems with the electrical infrastructure are common in California.

4. Water and resource management

- **Dry hydrants and reservoir problems:** Firefighters struggled to get water because hydrants were empty and key reservoirs were reportedly unavailable for maintenance.
- **Inadequate infrastructure:** Water storage and distribution systems were not adequately prepared for emergencies.

5. Emergency preparedness and response deficiencies

- **Delayed warnings:** Residents reported delayed or missing emergency notifications, making evacuations difficult.
- **Underfunded fire services:** Budget cuts and mismanagement of resources weakened firefighting efforts.

6. Leadership and policy issues

- **Governor Newsom's failures:** Despite warnings from experts, long-term fire prevention measures and infrastructure improvements were not adequately implemented.
- **Mayor Bass' priorities:** Critics say initiatives like diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) were prioritized over basic public safety measures.

7. Systemic Problems

- **Excessive fire suppression:** Decades of suppressing natural fires have encouraged dangerous fuel buildup in forests and chaparral ecosystems.
- **Urban sprawl:** The expansion of residential areas and infrastructure into fire-prone regions increases risks.
- **Ignorance of expert warnings:** Recommendations for better land management, infrastructure improvements, and fire-safe community planning have not been adequately implemented.

8. Arson

- **Intentional fires:** Some fires are started intentionally, often for criminal or psychological motives.
- **Careless arson:** Even when there is no intent, people can start fires through negligence, which can legally be considered arson.

9. Negligence

- **Campfires:** Improperly extinguished campfires can leave embers that are rekindled by wind.
- **Cigarette butts:** Discarded smoldering cigarettes are among the most common causes of wildfires.
- **Burning objects:** Carelessly discarded matches, fireworks, or other burning materials can start fires.

This combination of natural, environmental, logistical, and political factors highlights the complexity and multifaceted nature of California's wildfire problem. The solution requires a coordinated approach focused on prevention, preparedness, and infrastructure resilience. Above all, it requires more realism and common sense, and less woke ideology.