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PASADENA UNIFIED

Tree fight could delay school year, district says



A dog is walked past Washington Elementary STEM Magnet in Pasadena, where trees are on Pasadena Unified School District's list for removal due to soil contamination, on June 16. PUSD's plan to remove toxic soil from 11 sites has come under scrutiny from local community advocates over the proposed removal of about 200 trees. PHOTOS BY SARAH REINGEWIRTZ — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Officials: Protests prevent removal of toxic soil, leaving students at risk

By Ryan Carter and David Wilson
STAFF WRITERS

The Pasadena Unified School District said on Wednesday that community and city pushback over the district's efforts to remove trees on ground contaminated by toxins from the Eaton fire threaten "critical timelines" to fully restore campuses by the start of the school year.

Local advocates say more than 70 trees at PUSD sites have been cut down in the first month of what is the district's summerlong plan to remove trees. Removals are part of the district's effort to remediate soil contaminated by last year's disastrous fire. The initial plan to remove 193 trees was reduced after action by the PUSD Board of Education



Nina Raj of the Altadena Seed Library sits on limbs of an Aleppo pine to stop a contractor from fully taking down the tree at Pasadena Unified School District's headquarters.

to preserve up to 57 protected trees.

But advocates say that step was not enough to address the environmental disaster playing out in a region whose

tree canopy was comprehensively destroyed by the Eaton fire and subsequent debris removal and rebuild work.

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Old guard urges young activists to stand ground

By David Wilson
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Almost 30 years on from her two-year stay in a California redwood, environmental activist Julia "Butterfly" Hill looked up with pride Wednesday as Pasadena's next generation continued the fight to preserve trees.

Hill, along with fellow tree-sitter and activist John Quigley, visited the Pasadena Unified School District main office property Wednesday afternoon, and followed up with a visit to John Muir High School, where local tree advocates have

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SCHOOLS

LAUSD put under financial oversight

County education office warns district may not meet future obligations

By Teresa Liu
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The Los Angeles County Office of Education has placed the Los Angeles Unified School District under heightened fiscal oversight after determining the nation's second-largest school district may be unable to meet its financial obligations in the 2027-28 and 2028-29 fiscal years, citing the cost of recently approved labor agreements, ongoing structural deficits and declining enrollment.

The determination was outlined in a July 2 letter from Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools Debra Duardo's office to the district and publicly addressed by LAUSD on Wednesday. It assigns a county fiscal expert to advise the district officials as they work to address

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MIDDLE EAST

Retaliation by U.S., Iran expands with new targets

Airstrikes hit power plants, military bases in Gulf states

By Jon Gambrell
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — The United States launched new airstrikes against Iran early Thursday, and Tehran responded by targeting U.S.-allied Mideast countries in an exchange of fire that threatened an interim deal intended to help end the war in the Middle East.

Back-and-forth attacks, including a day earlier, have repeatedly threatened the ceasefire. But Thursday's appeared bigger all around, with sirens sounding at least

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT

LB drinking water meets state and federal quality standards

Report also shows a drop in reliance on imported sources

By Bella Kim
CORRESPONDENT

Long Beach's drinking water met all state and federal quality standards in 2025, according to the Utilities Department's annual report.

The department's 2025 Consumer Confidence Report, published last month, looked at more than 60,000 drinking water samples

and found that contaminants were below the maximum allowable levels mandated by the Environmental Protection Agency and California State Water Resources Control Board.

"The department's goal is always to meet and/or exceed federal and state drinking water quality standards," Utilities Department Assistant General Manager Tai Tseng said in a statement. "We continuously look for methods to improve quality and efficiency in operations to continue providing reliable and high-quality drinking water."

The department's annual report complies with the Safe Drinking Water Act, a federal

law requiring public water systems to provide customers with water quality information.

The report also found that groundwater sourcing increased from 60% to 71% over the last year, which minimizes reliance on imported water and creates more opportunities for recycled water.

"These advancements prioritize affordability for our customers now and in the future," General Manager Anatole Falagan said in the report.

The city purchased the remaining 29% of its water supply from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, which

imports surface water through the Colorado River Aqueduct and the State Water Project in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

Long Beach sources groundwater from Central Basin aquifers, which are refilled by rain and snowmelt. The city extracts groundwater from local wells managed by the Water Replenishment District. Before distribution, the Long Beach Groundwater Treatment Plant mixes groundwater and imported water.

Under the Safe Drinking Water Act, a

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