

MOTION

Throughout the City, the Bureau of Street Lighting (BSL) has struggled to keep street lights illuminated because of the continuous theft of copper wiring and other metals from city lighting fixtures. This widespread and ongoing criminal activity destroys the city's infrastructure, endangers the public by causing lengthy lighting outages, and costs taxpayers millions of dollars for necessary repairs.

These crimes are an outrage to the people of Los Angeles. The criminal who steals wire and other metal components will receive only a few dollars from scrap metal dealers, but the damage they cause will often cost taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars to repair. The crimes are also potentially deadly to the criminals themselves, as many of the city's street lights still use high voltage electrical power.

Copper wire theft is not a new problem for the Bureau and the City. As recently as 2019, the Council appropriated an additional \$500,000 for overtime costs to enable BSL's copper wire theft task force to rapidly bring lights back online. The problem has dramatically worsened in the past 18 months, because the price of scrap copper has nearly doubled in that time, making these thefts more lucrative for criminals.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Council INSTRUCT the Bureau of Street Lighting to report within 30 days on the neighborhoods that are most significantly impacted by outages, and particularly where there are repeated outages, and the budget and staffing needs to ensure that any street light impacted by theft is restored within seven days of the city's discovery of the outage.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Council INSTRUCT the Bureau of Street Lighting to report to the Council within 30 days with a comprehensive strategy to prevent metal theft from occurring in the first place, including reinforcing the public infrastructure to make metal components less accessible to criminals, and with recommendations on any necessary policy changes and budgetary and staffing needs to ensure the success of the strategy.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Council INSTRUCT the Bureau of Street Lighting to work with the Los Angeles Police Department to identify strategies for enforcing the law and holding metal thieves accountable for their crimes, including the possibility of marking and affixing GPS trackers in often-stolen pieces of city equipment to begin tracing the destination of stolen city goods and identify patterns of organized criminal activity.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Council INSTRUCT the Chief Legislative Analyst and the City Attorney to report on (1) the potential criminal and civil liability of scrap metal businesses that receive property stolen from the City of Los Angeles, and (2) options to impose a regulatory and permitting regimen on scrap metal businesses and metal recyclers that

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would allow the city to shut down any such business that fails to conduct due diligence on the origin of the materials that it receives.

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