

APR 08 2026

ATTACHMENT B

April 6, 2026

Dear Claremont City Council:

City Manager's Office

We wish to appeal the Commission's denial of our request for removal of one mature Canary Island pine on the right of way at 347 Indiana Ave. Our grounds for appeal is the requirement, stipulated at least four times in the Code and Policies and Guidelines, that the welfare of our trees must always be balanced with the safety of our residents, and this one tree's removal is a matter of medical urgency. We trust our postmark confirms that we are within the 10-day deadline of the Commission's April 1 meeting.

Should the Council vote to grant this appeal, it is understood that no removal work would commence until we have presented all medical documents supporting the assertions in this letter, and paid in full the entire cost of removal and replacement from our own funds, so that the cost to the city is zero.

Shortly after moving into our house a few months ago, a neighbor informed us that Indiana Ave., which contains only nine houses, had lost seven or eight mature Canary Island pines in just the last five years, either to Santa Ana wind blow-over, or precautionary removal due to imminent threat of blow-over. Later, we learned that 70 such trees had blown over in just one Santa Ana event four years ago. Clearly, these street trees have reached a point where they present an extreme risk of Santa Ana blow-over.

We immediately assessed the four Canary Island pine street trees on our property and found that this one tree presented an extreme risk because its location prevented it falling anywhere but directly on top of our house. The proven Santa Ana wind pattern (documents to be presented immediately upon your request) places our house directly in the line of fall, and the distance from our home is only 29 feet from its massive trunk. There is literally no room on either side of the home for it to land.

This certainty, when Santa Ana winds are forecast, makes sleep impossible. My wife and I are both elderly and disabled, and on days following a sleepless night, sleep deprivation greatly increases our risk profile for falling. This greatly-increased risk profile is, for my wife, clearly a risk to her life. For her, any fall could be fatal. She suffers from a rare bone disease, one that renders her bones so fragile that just a few years ago, simply stepping off a curb in the Village caused her left leg to snap in half, followed by four weeks in the hospital. My wife's specialist bone surgeon is Dr. Hrayr Basmajian. Her case manager is Dr. Sadiq Mandilawi. On hearing of this heightened risk of falling, our doctor placed her in Casa Colina's Vestibular and Balance program. But the only certain treatment is to have the threat posed by this tree removed, at our own expense for both removal and replacement.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. Our urban forest has 25,100 trees. We both love trees. Dr. Cornelius Muller, in whose honor Muller's oak, *Quercus Cornelius-mulleri*, is named, was my academic advisor, mentor, and friend when I was a botany major at UCSB. But risking the life of a person to save just one of more than 25,000 trees, and at no cost to the city, seems wrong. We hope you agree.

Sincerely,

Richard Suter, Ph.D.

Richard Suter, Ph.D.

Carol Suter

Approved by Carol Suter

Please see attached



Yes

Can a healthy tree blow over?

Yes, a healthy tree can blow over, especially during severe storms or high winds. While

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