



**Date:** May 22, 2007  
**To:** Mayor and Members of the City Council  
**From:** Bonnie Lowenthal, Vice Mayor, Councilmember, 1<sup>st</sup> District *BL*  
Suja Lowenthal, Councilmember, 2<sup>nd</sup> District *SL*  
**Subject:** Assist Catalina Recover from Fire

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On Thursday, May 10, Catalina Island was hit with a raging brush fire that threatened the port city of Avalon and forced the evacuation of hundreds of people throughout the evening and into the early morning hours. The Red Cross set up temporary shelters at Chavez Park and later at Cabrillo High School for those who had no nearby relatives or friends who could assist them.

As of Sunday night the fire had burned about 4,750 acres and was 73% contained. Most of the damage occurred in the rural hillside areas outside of Avalon and Two Harbors. Due to the diligence of firefighters, only one home and a few out buildings were lost because of the fire.

Long Beach is Catalina's closest neighboring city, and our City immediately offered assistance. Catalina Cruises ferried passengers and equipment back and forth throughout the night. Mutual aid agreements were exercised and multiple agencies supplied firefighters to combat the blaze. Our Department of Parks, Recreation and Marine offered Chavez Park as a shelter. Long Beach Unified School District allowed Cabrillo High School to be used as an overnight shelter. The Red Cross coordinated the intake and referral of incoming evacuees. Harbor area businesses also pitched in to transport equipment, including 18 fire trucks, to the island to combat the fire.

Now that the fire has been contained and most residents returned to the island, clean up and repair will need to begin. We would like to suggest that we offer our assistance in that effort, as well. Long Beach has many residents and business owners with generous hearts and the willingness to help our own "city across the bay."

There will be many opportunities to help Catalina repair itself. Volunteer organizations such as Long Beach Organics or the Volunteer Center could provide volunteers; the City of Long Beach may have surplus equipment that Catalina may be interested in; and students may be able to assist with community service.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Request that the City Manager work with the City Manager of Avalon to determine how the City of Long Beach and organizations in this city can best assist in the recovery from the May fire. Request periodic reports on this effort, and determine whether a hotline phone number would be helpful to recruit volunteers or other assistance for the island.