

Oakland accepts divisive grant to cut trees to prevent fires

June 3 2015

City officials have accepted a \$4 million federal grant to chop down trees in the ritzy Oakland hills, a decision that ignited debate over how best to prevent deadly wildfires.

The vote came after 2 a.m. Wednesday. The densely populated and wooded hills in drought-stricken California have long served as a potential fire hazard, especially when hot winds blow.

The city says clearing young [eucalyptus trees](#) and other non-native plants would deter another deadly firestorm like the one that killed 25 people and destroyed nearly 3,500 homes in 1991.

But some residents and environmentalists argue that low-lying brush is the primary concern. Hills Conservation Network, an environmental group, has filed a [federal lawsuit](#) to scuttle the tree-cutting project. The Sierra Club also sued, arguing the plan doesn't go far enough.

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