

Housing groups hit by 'mansion tax' bill

The fee has raised millions for affordable housing, but some nonprofits pay it too.

By Jack Flemming

Since the "mansion tax" took effect last April, a bevy of groups have aired their grievances.

Developers claim the tax eats into their profit margins, stifling new housing projects. Commercial property owners say their sales of warehouses and retail spaces shouldn't be subject to something that was billed as a "mansion tax."

Now, a new voice is joining the chorus of complaints: nonprofit housing organizations.

In the last year, a pair of nonprofits coughed up a combined \$6.1 million in mansion tax fees. Their leaders say the tax has hampered their ability to accomplish one of Measure ULA's primary goals: provide affordable housing.

Passed in 2022, Measure ULA brought a 4% transfer tax to all L.A. property sales above \$5 million and a 5.5% tax to sales above \$10 million. So far, it has raised more than \$439 million for affordable housing and homelessness prevention initiatives.

[See Tax, A10]

ANALYSIS

Kennedy fit to lead Health?

Why experts are alarmed by Trump's nomination of the anti-vaccine activist.

By Karen Kaplan, Corinne Purtill and Rong-Gong Lin II

With President-elect Donald Trump's nomination of Robert F. Kennedy Jr. to be Health and Human Services secretary, public health leaders are voicing fears that federal health agencies will be weakened even as the country faces rising threats from infectious diseases, emboldened industry lobbyists and the spread of medical misinformation.

If confirmed to lead Health and Human Services, Kennedy — a proponent of fringe medical conspiracy theories and self-described "poster child for the anti-vax movement" — would have oversight of institutions including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Food and Drug Administration, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and National Institutes of Health.

Like the two most recently confirmed Health [See Analysis, A7]



Photographs by AL SEIB For The Times

STANLEY JENSEN and wife Dawn DaMart survey the remains of Las Posas Estates, their Camarillo neighborhood, on Nov. 8.

Fire leaves ruin, survival side by side

Some homes still stand while others fell. Is it sometimes just down to chance?

By Noah Haggerty

CAMARILLO, Calif. — Stanley Jensen worked with firefighters to break open a melted safe amid the rubble of his family's home.

As Jensen used a window screen to sift the safe's ashen contents for diamonds and stones, his wife, Dawn DaMart, wandered the blackened foundation searching for tokens of the couple's life before the Mountain fire.

"Grammy, I made that for you," her granddaughter Violet called out, pointing in the ash. DaMart picked up a clay butterfly sculpture engraved with the 11-year-old's name.

Meanwhile, DaMart's longtime friend Pamela O'Kane, who lives in Thousand Oaks, surveyed the scene in disbelief. Not more than a few hundred feet away, other homes stood virtually unscathed.

"How can it just stop? How, when there are sparks flying everywhere?" O'Kane said. "Random — that's the

word I'm looking for. ... It is truly random."

It's a question many are now asking in Las Posas Estates and Camarillo Heights — two affluent communities nestled against the foothills of the Santa Susana mountains and dangerously close to a flammable, brush-dominated ecosystem.

Some houses, seemingly scattered at random, were reduced to rubble with only a lifeless moonscape left behind. Others, sometimes next door, were almost entirely unaffected — some still with lush green lawns.

Yet as urban and suburban sprawl continues to push communities further into fire-prone landscapes and climate change continues to worsen blazes, scientists and fire experts are fiercely debating what control homeowners really have over whether their home survives — or if it simply comes down to chance.

[See Fire, A9]



JENSEN RECEIVES a salvaged safe from Beverly Hills firefighter Missy Forreth as crews help homeowners search through the rubble.

COLUMN ONE

A 150-million-year wait for debutant

Gnatale, a big green dinosaur, will begin greeting visitors to L.A. museum Sunday.

By Corinne Purtill

150 million years ago: Laurasia

The massive neck dips, casting a curving shadow on the mossy ground. The dinosaur's jaws close around its prize. The creature lifts its head, nearly dainty in scale, and gnaws a mouthful of ferns.

It's the late Jurassic Period in the superconti-

ment of Laurasia, some 85 million years into the reign of the dinosaurs. The animal belongs to a herd of hefty herbivores who spend their days lumbering through an open landscape of conifers and gingkos, horsetails and monkey puzzle trees.

It's 10 tons at least, far longer than it is tall, its seemingly endless neck and tail held parallel to the ground in surprisingly delicate balance.

Stubby ankylosaurs graze in the distance; carnivorous allosaurs stalk for prey. Tiny mammals scamper out of the path of its

[See Gnatale, A10]



Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County

GNATALIE, an example of a previously undiscovered species, began its journey to the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County at a dinosaur dig in Utah.

Skirting Senate on Cabinet picks?

Recess appointments would let nominees skip regular confirmation process. NATION, A9

Ethical concerns over Elon Musk

A look at how contracts and altered regulations could benefit Trump's pick. BUSINESS, A12

A Thanksgiving rich in traditions

Local Black chefs share memories and recipes, including macaroni and cheese pie. WEEKEND, L6

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