

LOCAL 721



SERVICE EMPLOYEES
INTERNATIONAL UNION, CTW, CLC

OFFICERS

Bob Schoonover
PRESIDENT

Linda Dent
VICE PRESIDENT

Lillian Cabral
SECRETARY

David Green
TREASURER

DIRECTORS

LA COUNTY

Lydia Cabral
VICE PRESIDENT

Sharonda Wade
VICE PRESIDENT

Carolyn Dasher
Patrick Del Conte

Kelley Dixon

Valencia Garner

Steven Gimian

Adolfo Granados

Arcelia Lopez

Alina Mendizabel

Tony F. Mendoza

Omar Perez

Jose Sanchez

Grace Santillano

Veryeti Vassel

LA/OC CITIES

Stacey Karnya
VICE PRESIDENT

Nady Maechling
VICE PRESIDENT

Joaquin Avalos

Fidel Avila

Kesavand Korand

Daren McDaniel

Andy Morales

Simboa Wright

Salvador Zambrano

TRI-COUNTIES

Grace Sepulveda
VICE PRESIDENT

Rosa Castro
VICE PRESIDENT

Shannon Abramovitch

Roberto Camacho

Charles Harrington

Pamela Meadows

Liza Rocha

INLAND AREA

Tim Burke
VICE PRESIDENT

Cammie Sohm
VICE PRESIDENT

Oracio Diaz

Roger Nunez

Ed Toole

David Warpness

May 14, 2018

Hon. Sheila Kuehl, Chair, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
Hon. Janice Hahn, Chair Pro Tem, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
Hon. Hilda L. Solis, Supervisor, First District, Los Angeles County
Hon. Mark Ridley-Thomas, Supervisor, Second District, Los Angeles County
Hon. Kathryn Barger, Supervisor, Fifth District, Los Angeles County
Mark Pestrella, Director of Public Works, Los Angeles County

RE: Safe, Clean Water Program

Dear Honorable Board of Supervisors and Director Pestrella:

SEIU Local 721 commends the Board of Supervisors and the Department of Public Works (DPW) in their effort to increase water supply, improve water quality, and invest in communities by way of the proposed Safe, Clean Water (SCW) Program. We have reviewed the SCW Program "Draft Program Elements" and urge you to consider making the following improvements to the proposed program.

- **Require that jobs maintaining public infrastructure are public sector jobs.** The draft indicates that the Flood Control District / DPW *may* take on maintenance, but provides little clarity. The final Program document should specify that jobs maintaining *public infrastructure* should be carried out by the *public sector workforce*. The SCW proposes to support critical new infrastructure, which could range from specialized natural features in public parks and schools, all the way to large capital projects like dams. All of these projects will require the quality of upkeep that is best fostered by good jobs in the public sector, and the low turnover, institutional expertise, and commitment to public service that is characteristic of the public sector workforce.
- **Increase the level of funding to ensure proper maintenance.** The SCW Program draft provides automatically for funding to maintain projects, but limits such funding to "the portion of the Project funded by SCW funds." We recommend removing this limitation—though capital projects are readily funded by grants, bonds, and other funding instruments, it is notoriously difficult to come by funding to *maintain* those same projects.
- **Ensure quality maintenance of stormwater projects in all communities.** Smaller municipalities may not have the budget, workforce, or number of stormwater projects needed to support their own public sector maintenance crews. To ensure adequate maintenance of *all* projects funded by the SCW Program, the County should create a cross-departmental cadre of "green infrastructure" maintenance specialists. (Many of the County's existing job classifications, especially in parks, facilities, and infrastructure maintenance, may be suitable for this purpose.) This green infrastructure workforce could be deployed across the County to maintain stormwater capture projects, and be funded by this measure.

<http://www.seiu721.org>

Honorable Board of Supervisors and Director Pestrella

Re: Safe, Clean Water Program

May 14, 2018

Page 2

- ***Commit that County and municipal leaders will work with labor and the community to ensure equitable distribution of the SCW Program's benefits.*** Local leaders can amplify the good impact of this stormwater capture effort by creating multiple areas of public benefit, for example, by increasing and improving greenspace in park poor areas, investing in local and targeted hire of project construction and maintenance workers, and taking other measures to directly and distinctly benefit lower-income communities. The best way to achieve this end is to make sure that labor, community organizations, and disadvantaged communities all have a seat at the table with County and municipal leaders.

We appreciate the County's commitment to achieving a safe and clean water future for all residents. We believe that the above recommendations are key to accomplishing that goal, and we hope to work with the Flood Control District/DPW to effectively incorporate these recommendations into the final SCW Program proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Schoonover". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bob Schoonover

President

BS/cr