

TO: 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

CC: Safe, Clean Water Program Stakeholder Advisory Committee
Katy Young, Office of Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
Teresa Villegas, Office of Supervisor Hilda Solis
Russ Bryden, Los Angeles County Department of Public Works
Leslie Friedman Johnson, Conservation and Natural Resources Group
Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board

FROM: OurWaterLA

DATE: June 5, 2018

RE: Comments on Safe, Clean Water Program "Draft Program Elements" (Program)

OurWaterLA (OWLA) is submitting this letter in response to the May 25, 2018 version of the Safe, Clean Water Program "Draft Program Elements" (Program). We recognize that this draft incorporates input from a wide range of stakeholders and the tremendous efforts that have taken place to develop a Program which will achieve the goals of the authorizing motion by the Board of Supervisors. Thank you for your leadership in addressing many of the issues OWLA identified in its letter of May 11, 2018. There are still a few very significant issues that are of concern. The attached list of issues and suggested resolutions is a more detailed summary of our feedback.

Listed below are our major top line issues, most of which have been listed as part of our policy priorities for over a year and reflect the input of over 75 individuals and organizations:

1. Nature-Based Solutions: Must be a threshold

2. Disadvantaged Community (DAC) Issues: We have been unwavering in our objective of securing 41% of the total revenues for DAC communities. As currently recommended the Regional Program even at 110% only yields \$69M, 41% of total revenue is \$123K (assumes \$300K) slightly more than 50% of our total ask. The Municipal Program must include DAC requirements in order to achieve the 41% goal.

3. Multi-benefit must include all three elements: water quality, water supply and community investments. Can't be "and/or."

4. "Best efforts" for the Project Labor Agreements is not sufficient to meet the goals of providing for living wage jobs. Maintenance should be done by the public sector, such as a specialized County team.

5. Thresholds must be established for project criteria, particularly pollutant load reduction.

6. Community Investment Project Evaluation Criteria: Nature-based solutions are *not a community investment*. All the projects/programs identified on page 4 of the definitions as community investments should receive points, i.e., 25 points for 5 or more, 15 points for 4, 10 points for 3. Residents need to see tangible improvements to their communities.

7. Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) must be a true oversight committee with the task of verifying the SCW program goals are being met including the Municipal Program AND must have oversight of the “Scientific Studies” process which should be peer reviewed.

8. Governance

- Community organizations must be compensated at a reasonable rate, minimum of \$250 per meeting.
- School Board and local parks must have a seat on Watershed Area Steering Committees.
- MOU requirement should instead a Letter of Support for all projects less than \$2.5M

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this input. We look forward to a mutually agreeable resolution to these issues prior to the release of the Program on June 14, 2018 and the Board of Supervisors’ motion. Please feel free to contact Belinda Faustinos with any questions.

Sincerely,



Detailed Comments - June 5, 2018

RE: Safe, Clean Water Program Draft – May 25, 2018

Page 5

Project: Require that ***all projects***, including those in the Municipal Program result in all three benefits: Water Quality, Water Supply and Community Investments using Nature-Based Solutions.

Page 6

Regional Oversight Committee (ROC): The ROC must provide oversight of the Municipal Program and Scientific Studies requested by Watershed Area Steering Committees and require a peer review.

Stakeholder: Add social justice, health, local park and school board members.

Stormwater Investment Plan: Add DAC targets for each watershed.

Water Quality Benefit: Add urban runoff to the 2nd sentence.

Page 7

Reinsert policy goals.

Page 8

Section C. i.: delete the words “encouraging, best efforts”. The language must require that the thresholds adopted by the County apply to all funds.

Page 9

Section D.i.: Add “community engagement.”

Page 10

IV Infrastructure Program – delete “either or”; spectrum of Project types requires more definition. OWLA recommends that similar size projects be scored against each other and recommends the following framework for projects: Small: Under \$500K, Medium: \$501K - \$2.499M, and Large over \$2.5M.

Page 11

There must be a provision to fund projects considered to be a high priority by the Watershed Area Steering Committee even if they are not in an approved EWMP or WMP.

Page 13

Scientific Studies Program: Projects must be peer reviewed and approved by the ROC.

Page 20

Operating guidelines for Watershed Area Steering Committee will be developed by the District with input from stakeholders.

Page 21

Members of the Watershed Area...will be compensated in the amount of **\$500** per meeting attended.

Note: Anything less than this will not serve to further sustained engagement by NGOs/CBOS. Included in this estimate are the costs of meeting preparation, travel, participation and follow up including constituency coordination for each meeting

Sector-Specific Members:

School board members who have indicated a significant interest in participating should have a seat on the committee. A significant percentage of our open space opportunities for multi-benefit projects will need to be implemented on school properties.

Page 23

The ROC should be comprised equally of subject matter experts in water quality, water supply and community investments.

Page 25

OWLA supports a requirement that all projects must include a water quality benefit.

Project Criteria

- Water Quality - Threshold for pollutant reduction must be met and points adjusted
- Community Investments – Apply a range of points - Up to 25 (consistent with the number associated with water supply), i.e., 25 points for 5 or more, 15 points for 4, 10 points for 3 from the following list: creation and enhancement of parks and wetlands, or restoration of habitat and wetlands; improved public access to recreation and open space, providing enhanced or new recreational opportunities, greening of schools, improved public health, reduction of urban heat island effect, carbon reduction/sequestration, improved air quality, green waste reduction/diversion, education, technical assistance.

Page 28

Municipal Program: In order to achieve a goal of 41% investment in DAC communities, the Municipal Program must be held accountable for investing in their respective DAC communities as applicable. Further, under this program all three policy objectives must be met with Nature-Based Solutions as a threshold with the exception of a 10% cap on single-purpose solutions for Municipal Program.

Page 33

D. Procedures for Addressing Misuse of Funds and Failure to Comply with Requirements – The District must act on the advice of the ROC. The ROC will be able to evaluate and make recommendations based on the Watershed Investment Plans.

Page 36

At large Community Stakeholders - The requirement to be well versed in TMDL issues is too high a bar and will be a barrier to community participation. The language must be amended as follows: **The willingness to be trained and educated on** pollution abatement....TMDL issues related to this project.