



LEONARDO
DICAPRIO
FOUNDATION

July 5, 2018

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

RE: Safe, Clean Water Program

Dear Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors,

The Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation (LDF) has worked with advocates educating and empowering community members to realize their goals to ensure safe and clean water for future generations for years. Along with our partners, LDF is committed to working with the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to implement projects through a multi-benefit stormwater/urban runoff capture program that improves environmental health, strengthens communities, and improves water management.

We encourage you to support the Safe, Clean Water Program because it is a 21st century infrastructure model that provides multi-benefits, foremost in environmental health. Los Angeles would join the dozens of municipalities already adopting stormwater/urban runoff capture at scale. The program prioritizes distributed and neighborhood scale, nature-based solutions to capture, infiltrate, treat and use stormwater and dry-weather runoff. The projects will have the effect of cooling the ambient temperature, improving air quality, and greening pathways. These benefits are critical to keeping our region-- which is poised to experience 3-5 extreme heat days (temps over 95 degrees) --habitable.

The program will also strengthen communities throughout the region in lasting and equitable ways. Recent studies by the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy and the Economic Roundtable show that 13-17 full-time jobs per million (public) dollars spent are created through these types of projects. They also show that for every \$1 spent, \$2 is indirectly stimulated in the economy. Given the deepening disparities in wealth nationwide, these types of jobs and economic stimuli are critical to support strong communities.

To ensure the program maintains equity at its core, LDF encourages the County and cities to make well-informed decisions for spending program funds. A needs assessment based on green space, heat projections, income, and employment should inform the priority of projects. The smaller projects should be provided as direct-install, rather than rebate, type incentives because economists show the latter are disproportionately captured by higher income households. Last, meaningful oversight of each project should include the participation of community members that have the most to gain from this program.

Additionally, the program will create a local water supply that the region desperately needs. Since the 1930s, LA has imported the majority of its water supply. This dependence has created environmental and economic stresses we can no longer afford. We know these supplies are stressed by climate change and competing interests. Managers of these source waters are showing declining ecosystems and imposing cutbacks of water deliveries as a result. The law of supply and demand suggests that the longer

we remain dependent on these imported water supplies, the less affordable they will be for ratepayers. Moreover, the longer we remain dependent on them, the less resilient we become to the impacts of climate change impacting our water at its source and point of use. Further, the capture of stormwater/urban runoff also reduces pollution and improves the health of local waterways.

We appreciate the County of Los Angeles' strong commitment to achieving a safe and clean water future for all residents. We stand ready to work with you on providing input on the Safe, Clean Water Program and to assist with outreach to communities and leaders throughout Los Angeles County.

Sincerely,



Caryn Mandelbaum
Water Program Director
Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation

CC: Safe, Clean Water Program Stakeholder Advisory Committee
Leslie Friedman Johnson, Conservation and Natural Resources Group
Rachel Roque, Conservation and Natural Resources Group
Kelly Cook, Conservation and Natural Resources Group
Genevieve Osmena, Public Works, Los Angeles County
Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board