SAFE CLEAN WATER PROGRAM

Public Comment Form

Name:* Barbara Eisenstein

Organization*: Save San Pascual Park/Friends of So P

Email*: [redacted]

Phone*: [redacted]

Meeting: Nov. 4 - ULAR WASC

Date: 11/4/2026

☑ LA County Public Works may contact me for clarification about my comments

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Comments

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on ULAR projects along the Arroyo Seco.

Friends of
SOUTH PASADENA
NATURE PARK

November 4, 2026

Upper Los Angeles River Watershed Area Steering Committee
Safe, Clean Water Program

Dear Committee Members:

My name is Barbara Eisenstein. I am a South Pasadena resident, head of Friends of South Pasadena Nature Park, and member of the Save San Pascual Park coalition.

I am requesting clarification about the relationship among South Pasadena's four Arroyo Seco projects, particularly how uncertainty surrounding Project 1 could affect the design, benefits, and funding of Project 2.

The four projects began with a single feasibility study in 2020 but now have separate applications. Are they being evaluated as independent projects or as components of an interconnected system? Separate funding applications do not, by themselves, establish that the projects function independently.

Project 1, Arroyo Seco–San Rafael Treatment Wetlands, is funded through construction under the Arroyo Seco Water Reuse Project, led by Pasadena. Project 2, the Arroyo Park Infiltration Gallery, received approximately $1 million in August for planning and design. Its preliminary plan includes water piped from Project 1. That connection raises questions about proceeding with Project 2 while Project 1's future remains unresolved.

Uncertainty surrounding Project 1

Project 1 faces substantial community opposition and unresolved concerns about downstream dry-weather flows, removal of trees and existing habitat, use of Los Angeles parkland, tribal cultural resources, and diversion of Arroyo Seco water for golf course irrigation. These concerns affect whether the project should proceed in its proposed form and whether less destructive alternatives could meet water-quality objectives.

The project's technical documents also raise questions about its claimed groundwater-recharge benefits. The San Pascual geotechnical report warns that shallow bedrock will restrict downward infiltration and cause water to accumulate above bedrock and move laterally. The final environmental review should explain how those conditions are reconciled with the project's modeled infiltration and recharge benefits.

Community participation remains another concern, particularly outreach to nearby Los Angeles residents and non-English-speaking communities. Residents whose parkland, habitat, and access to the Arroyo would be affected deserve meaningful involvement in decisions about its future.

The Final EIR has not yet been released. Its responses to comments and supporting analysis will need careful review. If significant deficiencies remain, certification of the Final EIR and subsequent project approval could face a legal challenge. I am not suggesting that litigation is certain or predicting its outcome. However, possible litigation, additional environmental review, redesign, or delay should be considered when evaluating a connected project's schedule and benefits.

Questions about Project 2 and program oversight

I request written responses to the following:

1. Independent operation: If Project 1 is delayed, substantially redesigned, or does not proceed, can Project 2 function independently? Which of Project 2's claimed water-supply and water-quality benefits depend on receiving water from Project 1?
2. Re-evaluation of benefits and design: If Project 1 changes, will Project 2's water balance, performance estimates, cost-effectiveness, and design be re-evaluated? Please distinguish benefits achievable independently from those contingent on Project 1.
3. Funding assumptions: Because Project 2's planning and design funding was based on a preliminary plan that includes water from Project 1, what changes would trigger reconsideration of its scope, benefits, or funding conditions? How will design spending remain useful if that connection becomes unavailable?
4. Public disclosure: How does the Safe, Clean Water Program track dependencies among separately funded projects? Where can the public review the assumptions about shared flows, infrastructure, schedules, and benefits, including safeguards against counting the same benefit twice?
5. Coordinated environmental review: Have the applicants evaluated whether CEQA's "whole of the action" standard calls for these connected facilities to be reviewed together? Their common origin alone may not resolve that question, but their physical and operational connections warrant a clear explanation. If separate reviews are appropriate, how will those reviews address the combined effects of all four projects?

Please refer these questions to the appropriate lead agencies and the Regional Coordination Team, and make their written responses publicly available before further decisions commit Project 2 to a design dependent on Project 1.

An opportunity for ecosystem restoration

All four projects include native plants, but their designs could and should go further. Native landscaping alone does not demonstrate restoration of the Arroyo's ecological and hydrologic functions.

Consistent with the Board of Supervisors' support for Arroyo Seco ecosystem restoration, please evaluate coordinated, nature-based alternatives that protect existing trees and habitat, maintain downstream flows, improve water quality, and reduce reliance on underground chambers and other gray infrastructure. That evaluation should also consider compatibility with the Arroyo Seco Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study.

Public funding should support a coherent approach to the Arroyo's future, with transparent assumptions, credible benefits, and designs that advance ecosystem restoration.

Thank you for your consideration.

Barbara Eisenstein
Friends of South Pasadena Nature Park
Save San Pascual Park coalition

[redacted]

Public Comment Form

Name:* Orchid Black

Organization*: CA. Native Plant Society

Email*: [redacted]

Phone*:

Meeting: Upper LA WASC

Date: 11/4/2026

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Comments

Speaking with concerns on Arroyo Seco Water Reuse Project need for redesign.

SAFE CLEAN WATER PROGRAM

Public Comment Form

Name:* Jane Tsong

Organization*: community member

Email*: [redacted]

Phone*: [redacted]

Meeting: Upper Los Angeles River WASC Meeting

Date: 11-4-2026

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Comments

I have been a resident of the Arroyo Seco watershed for more than 2 decades. I raised my kids in and along the rare remaining natural sites along our local waterways. I channeled my love for local waters into researching and blogging, then worked for a watershed-focussed conservancy for 7 years, serving on the Nature Based Solutions Blue Ribbon Panel alongside other people who love this land to find a pathway for public money to support NbS in our communities. Arroyo Seco Water Reuse Project is being proposed on a truly unique location that is one of the wildest places that can be accessed by people in my part of Los Angeles without driving.

Community engagement is integral to the SCWP ethos but there were flaws in how engagement was conducted. The Scoping Phase presentation presented only general bullet points and in a misleading manner. Many community members including myself made comments at the scoping phase. These were disregarded, as were the sole comments submitted by the indigenous community. I went to a site walk sponsored by the project in June, after the project was already fully designed. Members of the public were eager to understand the project more clearly, but noone from the city or design side was present to answer technical questions about how the project functions. The project does not acknowledge decades of restoration planning led by grassroots nonprofits, Arroyo Seco Foundation and Northeast Trees.

I beg you to reconsider this expenditure of public funds through the lens of those of us who actually live in the immediate community, and the ecosystem function of the remaining natural spaces accessible to us. I beg you to ask the project proponents to work with experts in watershed restoration to collaborate on a design that can improve water quality, while also supporting, not degrading ecosystem function, and quality of life for community members.

Public Comment Form

Name:* Shawn Maestretti

Organization*: Studio Petrichor and Poly/Ana

Email*: [redacted]

Phone*: [redacted]

Meeting: Upper Los Angeles River WASC Meeting

Date: 11/4/2026

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Comments

Poly/ Ana is very committed to this meaningful distributed solutions collaborative project AltadenaLivingStreetsProjects

Public Comment Form

Name:* Sam Richman

Organization*: Poly/Ana

Email*: [redacted]

Phone*: [redacted]

Meeting: Nov 4 - ULAR WASC

Date: 11/4/2026

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Comments

We aren't able to attend this meeting but wanted to share that our nonprofit organization Poly/Ana is very committed to this meaningful distributed solutions collaborative project! Thank you.

SAFE CLEAN WATER PROGRAM

Public Comment Form

Name:* Jens Jonason

Organization*: Self

Email*: [redacted]

Phone*: [redacted]

Meeting: ULAR WASC

Date: 11/4/2026

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Comments

I am a Board member of Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council, but I don't speak on behalf of the Board; I speak only for myself.
I support the Arroyo Seco Water Reuse Project.
During the September 7, 2026 storm, I personally observed that the water in the Arroyo Seco channel—and the diverted water flowing through the San Pascual site was black.
That visible condition, together with the emerging contaminants on today's agenda, including PFAS and 6PPD-quinone, makes the need for pretreatment clear.
ASWRP is designed to remove sediment and particles that can carry some of these pollutants. That is an essential function and benefit, even as we continue improving treatment for contaminants that require more.
We can't wait for long-term source-control efforts to succeed before treating the polluted runoff entering the Arroyo today. We need both, and we need ASWRP now.

SAFE CLEAN WATER PROGRAM

Public Comment Form

Name:* Noel McCarthy

Organization*: citizen

Email*: [redacted]

Phone*: [redacted]

Meeting: ULAR

Date: 11/4/2026

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Comments

Im here to voice my support for the Arroyo Secco water Reuse Project. I realize for the most part youve only heard negative feedback regarding the project. From the very beginning I've been a supporter of the concept of leveraging this extremely rare existing infrastructure into a functional water cleaning system with the added bonuses of creating a Native Californian ripairian habitat- all while reducing the potable water use for recreational spaces is a win/win for all the communities involved.

The existing totally artificial wetland was designed for water capture and irrigation - this new version will do far more - and its frankly the future of our watershed. Obviously the flood control channels built in the 1930s was a terrible choice. But we're stuck with it - the result is that the formerly natural meandering flood plain is now our built environment - a very narrow strip of land hemmed in by private property.

And i find it misleading to continually argue for the removal for something that's not going anywhere in any of our lifetimes - and that anything short of naturalizing the watershed shouldn't be supported. Nature based solutions is the popular phrase of the day.... but natures water purification requires lots of space and time. Space to change course when it gets silted in - space to spread out and percolate over time. We have neither of these available where we need it along the greater LA river system.

For better or for worse our watersheds future is exactly projects like this. a system of artificial wetlands parallel to the flood channel where public space allows - that for the most part mechanically cleans water while providing as much native habitat as can be properly maintained. Thank you for your time.

SAFE CLEAN WATER PROGRAM

Public Comment Form

Name:* Egor Chumak Organization*: ItisOverdue

Email*: [redacted] Phone*: [redacted]

Meeting: Upper LA River Wasc Date: 11/04/2026

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Comments

I am here to verbally and in-writing express my support of agenda item 5 and 7i

SAFE CLEAN WATER PROGRAM

Public Comment Form

Name:* Ty Forman Organization*: _____

Email*: [redacted] Phone*: _____

Meeting: _____ Date: _____

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Comments

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Public Comment Form

Name:* Peter Reynaldo Organization*: Constituent

Email*: [redacted] Phone*: [redacted]

Meeting: ULAR 11/4 Date:

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Comments

Speaking on behalf of ASWRP