

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS SHEILA KUEHL AND HILDA SOLIS

May 30, 2017

Regional Water Resilience Planning, Outreach, and Engagement, and Stormwater Capture Expenditure Plan

California’s new climate reality is one of extreme weather cycles, recently escalating quickly from a debilitating drought to record-breaking rainfall and catastrophic flooding. This winter – after five straight years of drought – we faced massive storms, which, almost overnight, made California’s current rainy season the second wettest in 122 years. Even with this extraordinary rainfall, however, the impacts of the drought persist. Years of water scarcity exhausted the reservoirs on which Southern California has historically depended. Even more importantly, this rapid and severe climate uncertainty leaves us apprehensive about the anticipated return of drought conditions – possibly for even longer, and with greater severity.

On April 5, 2016, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors passed a motion directing the Department of Public Works, in coordination with other County departments, cities, local water agencies, business stakeholders, non-profit organizations, school districts, and other regional stakeholders, to design and develop a Drought Resilience Plan, subsequently referred to as the Water Resilience Plan

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(Plan), in order to increase drought preparedness and local water self-reliance, improve water quality to protect public health, and advance our communities' abilities to adapt to the effects of climate change. The Board further directed County departments to identify the most appropriate funding mechanism needed to ultimately implement the Plan.

The Plan, the first phase of which is expected to be completed in the Summer of 2017, will call for smart investments in our infrastructure to enable communities to capture every single possible drop of water, better manage our existing supplies, protect our beaches and oceans from contamination, create greener neighborhoods and parks, and improve coordination among relevant government agencies.

Since January of this year, the state has faced a series of record-breaking storms. This abundance of water presents an opportunity – a chance to capture water during big storms to help ease the impacts of drought cycles that will ultimately return. Although there is infrastructure in place in the Los Angeles region to capture some of that water, it is not enough. Currently, the County of Los Angeles manages to capture and store enough stormwater to meet the demand of over one-and-a-half million residents each year. Research has shown that implementation of regional stormwater capture projects could increase this amount between two- and three-fold—capturing enough water to meet the needs of nearly one third of the County's residents—by ensuring the region can capitalize on erratic and intense rain events.

Capturing more stormwater will also protect public health and the communities we live in by preventing large volumes of runoff from carrying trash, bacteria, chemicals, and debris through our rivers, and polluting our popular and iconic beaches and

bays.

The Department of Public Works recently completed a Water Resilience Rapid Assessment (Assessment) outlining some of the early findings of the planning effort and greatest perceived needs relevant to building regional water resilience. The Assessment finds that stormwater capture strategies represent a unique opportunity for the region to substantially supplement local water supply, improve water quality, and provide additional benefits for watershed health and community quality of life. The Assessment further finds that, while other types of water management infrastructure are supported by reliable sources of revenue, stormwater infrastructure and management has little to no reliable funding.

Los Angeles County and eighty-five of its cities are required to implement programs that include building stormwater capture and clean-up projects as part of Federal Clean Water Act compliance. The State has authority to assess significant financial penalties if these projects are not built. While some municipalities have passed fees and taxes to address some of the stormwater funding need, most have no funding source to pay for it.

The County understands the need to responsibly manage public funds, and to collaborate with other stakeholders responsible for water infrastructure. The Plan will offer options for essential investments in our infrastructure and underscore those water strategies that have the greatest potential for significant impact. It will also survey existing resources that might be leveraged or allocated more effectively and efficiently. Unfortunately, existing funds cannot meet all our needs. Notably, very little funding is currently available to support the innovative, multi-benefit stormwater

capture projects already identified in the Assessment.

Long-term regional solutions that make us more resilient against weather extremes – now and in the future – remain essential. By strategically investing in multi-benefit stormwater projects we can address urgent water quality needs and catch more rainfall during big storms to help ease the impacts of drought cycles that are certain to return. We can also leverage existing local, state and federal funding for parks, transportation, and other sources to maximize the impact of stormwater funding dollars.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Director of the Department of Public Works through the Los Angeles County Flood Control District (District), Chief Executive Officer, County Counsel and other appropriate departments to collaborate, utilizing internal and external expertise as needed, to:

1. Conduct broad-based education, outreach, and engagement programs to educate stakeholders and the public about County water issues, and to solicit input on the Water Resilience Plan.
2. Develop an Expenditure Plan that will determine an appropriate parcel tax to implement stormwater projects and programs, with emphasis on projects providing multiple benefits that increase water supply, improve water quality, and provide community enhancements such as the greening of schools, parks and wetlands, and increased public access to rivers, lakes and streams. The Expenditure Plan shall:
 - a. Be developed collaboratively with stakeholders including, but not limited to, the County's municipalities, local water agencies, public

health agencies and organizations, businesses, labor, non-profit organizations, school districts, and community groups.

- b. Specify allocation of funds to regional programs, including local return for municipalities.
 - c. Include programs to fund both capital projects and ongoing operations and maintenance.
 - d. Incorporate, as appropriate, elements of existing regional plans, including: Integrated Regional Water Management Plans, Urban Water Management Plans, Watershed Management Plans, and Enhanced Watershed Management Plans.
 - e. Make provision for ongoing stakeholder involvement in program implementation to help ensure that benefits are realized throughout the region.
 - f. Identify existing sources of funds and describe opportunities for coordinated investment and cost-sharing.
 - g. Include provisions for local job training and employment opportunities.
3. Analyze potential mechanisms to provide credits or rebates for entities and properties that have already demonstrated benefits meeting key program purposes in the Expenditure Plan.
 4. Pursue amendments to the Los Angeles County Flood Control Act (Chapter 755 of the Statutes of 1915) to expand the District's authority to impose a parcel tax within the District's geographic boundary, and allocate revenues

to municipalities and regional entities to develop stormwater projects and programs, and make technical updates to the District's enabling legislation.

5. Come back to the Board within nine months with an Expenditure Plan and update on the Water Resilience Plan.

S: SK/HS: KY/TV/ Regional Water Resilience Planning, Outreach and Engagement and Stormwater Capture Expenditure Plan