



May 8, 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,

350 South Bay Los Angeles is excited to learn that the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors is moving forward with a Safe, Clean Water Program so greatly needed here in Southern California. As a background, 350 South Bay L.A. is the oldest 350 chapter in California and we work in the South Bay (Beach Cities) and Los Angeles Harbor areas, with special emphasis on work directed to achieving environmental justice in communities unjustly burdened with the effects of pollution. As such, 350 South Bay L.A. committed to working with the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to ensure safe and clean water for future generations through a multiple benefit storm water and urban runoff capture program to increase water supply, improve water quality, and investment in communities.

We strongly encourage the Safe, Clean Water Program to prioritize distributed and neighborhood scale, **nature-based solutions** (green as opposed to gray infrastructure) to capture, treat, and use storm water and dry weather runoff. We welcome seeing more wetlands in our communities, bioswales in our local parks and green alleys and streets in our urban neighborhoods. As important, we welcome the capture of storm water and related runoff which too often leave our local beaches and recreational waters too dirty and dangerous to use. Nature based solutions filter pollutants out of water and air, sequester carbon, infiltrate water to aquifers, reduce urban heat island effect, provide shade, and aesthetically enrich environments. Such projects and programs can help achieve a more sustainable and equitable water future for all communities in Los Angeles County.

It is critically important that these projects be built throughout the region in an equitable way for all residents, especially disadvantaged communities like those in the Los Angeles Gateway and Harbor areas. Funding for the County-based projects should be distributed in a manner that promotes equity for underserved communities and mitigates

displacement. Moreover, nature-based or green infrastructure solutions tend to be much less expensive and more cost-effective than their traditional gray (concrete) cousin.

For people without advanced schooling, these solutions can provide good paying and green jobs (design, engineering, construction and ongoing operations & maintenance) and a pathway to the middle class, something really needed in communities like Wilmington and Watts. Because these projects tend to be smaller and have a less capital-intensive bidding process for contractors, cities such as Philadelphia have found the green infrastructure approach to help level the playing field for smaller, local firms to win valuable public works contracts.

In addition to job creation, a new opportunity exists to foster the development of a local industry in advance of other regions as green infrastructure techniques are still in their relative youth. With the passage of the Safe, Clean Water Program, Southern California has the potential to become the largest purchaser in the country of specialized equipment such as cisterns, rain tanks, and various permeable materials. This would make Southern California a logical home for anticipated manufacturing activities.

We are strongly committed to increasing local water supply to lessen the region's carbon footprint by reducing reliance on imported water and other energy-intensive water strategies. In addition, all projects should strive to reduce pollution and improve the health of waterways, habitat and beaches in the Los Angeles region. We applaud the County of Los Angeles' strong commitment to achieving a safe and clean water future for all residents. 350 South Bay L.A. stands 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,

Sherry Lear, Co-Organizer, 350 South Bay Los Angeles
Michael Busman, Lead Volunteer, Our Water LA Coalition, 350 South Bay Los Angeles

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