



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 27, 2018

RE: OurWaterLA - **Los Angeles County's Water Future Hangs in the Balance.**

We support the County's progress towards a strong Safe, Clean Water Program, support its principles, and recognize the urgent need for the SCWP

Los Angeles County has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to overhaul our outdated approach to water. We can better prepare for climate change and future droughts, while addressing water pollution and reliability and cleaning and greening underserved communities. We urge the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to place a public funding measure on the November 2018 ballot to increase water supply and improve water quality by capturing and cleaning stormwater.

The measure could raise \$300 million per year for nature-based, pollution-fighting projects such as wetlands, green streets, and multi-benefit parks and open space. We can turn greater Los Angeles into a sponge, harvesting billions of gallons of stormwater for use, instead of dumping it (and pollution) into the ocean. Pollution threatens the health of our families and waterways so acting now is imperative.

Projects and programs supported by this measure would:

- Provide a more reliable supply of clean and local water, reducing reliance on imported water
- Reduce trash and flooding in our neighborhoods and shoreline
- Create more open-spaces and shade and invest in disadvantaged communities
- Generate new, good jobs through building and maintaining projects

OWLA supports the general direction that the County has taken with successive versions of the Safe, Clean Water Program (Program). We continue to advocate for:

Equity:

- The inclusion of a strong, clear equity goal to ensure that Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) receive at least 41% of the overall funding for projects and benefits.
- A definition of “benefit to a DAC” that ensures DACs get good projects built in their communities and residents are involved in all stages of a project.
- Continued exploration of ways to mitigate the tax-burden to low-income homeowners and renters through education, credits/rebates/incentives, and other programs.

Project Selection & Criteria:

- More specific definitions and metrics for nature-based projects and community investment in the scoring criteria so that projects with meaningful multiple benefits are favored over mere nods to community greening and enhancement (e.g., do not award points for planting a few token trees).
- Continuing to push water quality metrics that prioritize pollution reduction over cost-effectiveness based on volume of diverted stormwater.
- Cap of 30% for single-benefit projects (e.g., street sweeping) for City of LA, City of Long Beach, and unincorporated County.

Good Jobs, Career Pathways & Community Education/Engagement:

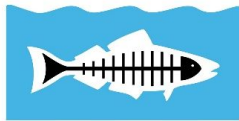
- Community workforce agreement and local/targeted hire policy that applies to all large capital projects.
- Maintenance done by the public sector and in partnership with high quality workforce development programs to train local residents for these jobs.

Governance

- Specified seats for local school board members and local parks on the Watershed Steering committee.
- Technical training for NGOs and CBOs to develop capacity to be on these committees.
- Reasonable compensation for community member participation on the Watershed Steering Committee.

We urge you to include these provisions in the Safe, Clean Water Program.

The time to act is now. We must seize this opportunity to secure our water future and address water pollution issues that will only worsen over time. The Safe, Clean Water Program creates the essential framework for pursuing local and regional solutions. It provides a fair and balanced approach to addressing our immediate pollution problems and sets us on a course for a healthier, more equitable and resilient future. We urge you to act on July 10th to put this much-needed measure before the voters.



Heal the Bay

