

Los Angeles County Flood Control District
Safe Clean Water Program (SCWP)
County of Los Angeles

Re: Public release of WASC meeting recordings

December 21, 2021

Dear Los Angeles County Flood Control District,

The Rio Hondo Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC) requests that the District make it standard procedure to post the video recordings of WASC meetings to the SCWP website, for the duration of our virtual meetings continuing. Making these recordings of the meetings available to the public (which are open to the public and already recorded), will substantially increase equitable access for WASC members, stakeholders and the community to the information needed to review presentations and comprehend discussions of complex projects, budgets and program issues.

As voting committee members of the Rio Hondo WASC, we have an important commitment to the public and to the voters, for transparency and accountability in administering the County of Los Angeles's Safe, Clean Water Program.

Meaningful community engagement and education are cornerstones of the Safe, Clean Water Program to ensure equitable implementation of the Program, and the keys to achieving those goals are:

1. Identify existing barriers to public participation
2. Remove those barriers, and
3. Create pathways to community engagement.

The current meeting format presents a clear barrier to public participation. The Rio Hondo WASC meeting takes place online over WebEx, on Tuesdays from 1:00 to 3:00 pm during the workday. Almost no members of the community currently participate. Very clearly, representation from Disadvantaged communities is almost zero.

It is commonplace for many municipal governments and agencies to make their meeting video recordings available to the public to increase community engagement, education and transparency. This allows the public and stakeholders to review the meeting content on their own time.

The District currently records each online meeting but does not currently make those recordings available to anyone, including WASC members or the public. District staff uses the recordings internally to review and produce meeting minutes. The meeting minutes, however, do not capture the substantial discussion which takes place during the meetings on each item, and presenters' comments and back-and-forth questions and answers.

As WASC members, it is extremely frustrating that District staff must currently deny us access to the recordings of our own meetings because of current policy. Since we cannot re-watch discussions of complex projects and budgets, this policy is impeding informed decision-making and equitable implementation of projects.

Making the video recordings publicly available for review:

- will greatly benefit WASC members' review of projects over the many months that elapse before making funding decisions,
- will help future project proponents improve their presentations,
- will help onboard future committee members and bring them up to speed,
- and will help bring stakeholders and community members into these complex watershed conversations as only video can efficiently achieve this understanding.

Seeing no downsides to making the recordings available, we request that the District move to implement this policy for all WASCs as soon as possible in 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Rio Hondo Watershed Area Steering Committee