

Moore, Katharine

From: Seward, Kara
Sent: Monday, December 16, 2013 9:53 AM
To: Moore, Katharine
Cc: Hanson, Patricia
Subject: FW: LA River Revitalization -Comments

For public comment.

Kara Seward
District Director | Office of Senator Fran Pavley, SD 27 | 5016 N Parkway Calabasas, Suite 222 | Calabasas, CA 91302 |
(818) 876-3352 | kara.seward@sen.ca.gov

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From: Richard [mailto:rcfisk@verizon.net]
Sent: Monday, December 16, 2013 9:49 AM
To: Seward, Kara
Subject: Re: LA River Revitalization -Comments

Kara,
Yes, please, that was the intent.



Richard Fisk
818-368-7454

----- Original Message -----

From: [Seward, Kara](mailto:kara.seward@sen.ca.gov)
To: 'Richard'
Sent: Monday, December 16, 2013 9:38 AM
Subject: RE: LA River Revitalization -Comments

Thank you, Richard. Would you like to submit this as public comment for the hearing?

Best,
Kara

Kara Seward
District Director | Office of Senator Fran Pavley, SD 27 | 5016 N Parkway Calabasas, Suite 222 | Calabasas, CA 91302 |
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From: Richard [mailto:rcfisk@verizon.net]
Sent: Saturday, December 14, 2013 6:24 AM
To: Seward, Kara
Subject: LA River Revitalization -Comments

Thank you for bringing the concerned river groups together for the December 13th hearing. With their presentations, I saw some very creative and valuable projects being done in the Valley sections of the River. Capturing and treating rain runoff and creating space for recreation along with paths for bicycle travel are projects that improve the quality of life for the residents of the City. My concern and comments are directed at the Army Corps 11 mile ARBOR project. In brief, it is not a project that is worth the cost versus its value to the human population and economic vitality of the region. Below is an article I wrote for the San Fernando Valley Business Journal, published on December 9th of this year.

The river needs revitalization but we can't afford the bill L.A. City leaders have in mind. There are lots of opportunities to make the banks of the 51 mile long river an attractive destination for recreation and economic investment. It is already being done along the river in the San Fernando Valley as part of the 2007 Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan.

The current LA River Revitalization Study is the creation of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and is described as a river *ecosystem* restoration. Their report studied 11 miles of the river from the LADWP Headworks site north of Griffith Park to First Street in downtown LA. They explored 21 alternative options finalizing on 4 to comprehensively study; Alternatives 10, 13, 16, & 20 with increasing costs starting at \$375 million. The Army Corps recommends alternative #13 while the City settled on the more expensive Alternative 20.

Alternative 20 is effectively a combination of the other alternatives. Costing \$1.08 billion, it restores 719 acres back to the riparian community (the natural habitat area between land and a river or stream) creating interconnects that no longer exists between isolated areas for wildlife migration. Fourteen of the streams entering the river via concrete culverts will be removed and converted to earthen swales and wetlands. It requires moving some 23 large steel power transmission towers up to 10 miles away and relocating the railroad bed to newly constructed trestles. For recreation along the river, the plan has allocated a paltry \$4.18 million of the \$1.08 billion to build 2 parking lots, 3 pedestrian bridges, 3 restrooms, a new 4 mile trail and some viewing points. [added Dec 13: the existing bike lanes and exercise pockets will be destroyed without specifically being addressed with respect to their relocation or budgeted cost]

The proposed plan did not study flood risk management, does nothing for storm water reclamation or water quality and in fact cites a concern for increased breeding grounds for disease vectors "*potentially resulting in an increase in the incidence of infectious diseases*".

For economic enrichment, the desired plan cites pages of rhetoric and examples in other cities of how restoring the river creates an attractive environment, resulting in thousands of new jobs. The fact is that this proposed project directly and permanently displaces jobs, "*disproportionately affect[ing] the low-income and minority populations*". By converting over 200 acres of industrial land at Taylor and PiggyBack Yards into wetlands, the economically productive land will be removed forever from the City's tax base. Proponents of the plan say those lost jobs "*may be transferred elsewhere*". Where in the LA area are there 100 acre parcels that are serviced by an operating railroad line? It was just 4 years ago that the City boasted at the chance of creating jobs and economic growth on that very land by bringing in an Italian company to assemble Metro line cars.

The Army Corps report says the land surrounding the river "*is essentially built out*". To restore the ecosystem habitat, they are planning on widening the river, from 60 feet in places up to 647 feet at its widest that will require ripping out the flood control concrete banks, buying land and displacing existing businesses. So, where in the plan is the space to build restaurants and shops for people to meander along the sides of the river? It's not; the plan is designed solely for ecosystem restoration to create more space for birds and fish to wander around.

Other than in the few rainy months, there is not enough water running in the river to make it look like a river. Widening it will make appear like there is even less water in it. Nearly 70% of the water flowing in the river is from the water reclamation plants where it then flows into the Pacific Ocean. Isn't one of the City's priorities to reclaim and reuse, via purple pipes, reclaimed water? This river plan doesn't help that cause.

Proponents of this Billion dollar project say we can't pass up this opportunity for partial Federal funding. But those dollars can only be spent for habitat restoration. Meanwhile, the city is about to

propose new fees and taxes of up to \$3 Billion to repair city streets, \$1.5 billion to fixing our sidewalks, \$1 billion for free WiFi, potentially billions more in Seismic retrofit buildings and court ordered mandatory storm water cleanup. We have bursting water mains, aging sewer and gas lines, exploding transformers and electricity brown outs. United Chambers of Commerce believes that the City needs to spend the money for the human habitants of the city to repair and upgrade our infrastructure and invest in projects that enhance the neighborhood and business communities. An attractive River experience can be built for far less than \$100 million per mile that doesn't remove businesses or economically productive land. With all the other expenses the City is facing, we cannot afford this Army Corps river plan. It is for the birds.....

Richard Fisk

Co-Chair Government Affairs; United Chambers of Commerce