

Communication from Public

Name: San Fernando Valley Audubon society

Date Submitted: 07/23/2024 11:23 AM

Council File No: 24-0140-S1

Comments for Public Posting: San Fernando Valley Audubon Society strongly supports the Los Angeles City Council motion in CF 24-0140-S1 which requests first that the City Attorney analyze the impact of Grants Pass on existing Los Angeles City ordinances relating to sleeping, lying, and storage of property (Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) § 41.18, 56.11, and 63.44), and also on existing litigation related to such activities. Further, we support the directive to the Los Angeles City Chief Legislative Analyst and City Administrative Officer to prepare a report on current laws in the rest of the county which may impact the City of Los Angeles. We urge the Housing and Homelessness Committee to quickly pass this measure and send it to the full council with a request that all reports be prepared as soon as possible. Please see the attached letter addressing this City Council motion.



San Fernando Valley Audubon Society

Incorporated as California Audubon Society in 1913

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For the conservation of wildlife, natural resources, and nature education.

July 22, 2024

Hon. Nithya Raman, Chair, City Council Housing & Homelessness Committee (HHC) Hon. Bob Blumenfield, Vice-Chair; Hon. Marqueece Harris-Dawson, Hon. Kevin de León and Hon. Monica Rodriguez, Members, HHC

Additional co-sponsors of CF 24-0140-S1: Hon. Traci Park, Hon. Paul Krekorian, Hon. John Lee, Hon. Curren D. Price, Jr. and Hon. Imelda Padilla (second)

Via email and submission to the City Clerk online filing portal in CF 24-0140-SI

Re: SUPPORT for Council File 24-0140-S1 (Park, Krekorian, et al.)

Dear City Councilmembers:

California Audubon Society dba San Fernando Valley Audubon Society (SFVAS) represents a large geographic area including virtually the entire San Fernando Valley, west to Ventura County and north to the Kern county line. Much of the San Fernando Valley is part of the City of Los Angeles and includes a number of very large city owned and operated parks, including the Sepulveda Basin and Hansen Dam areas, and O'Melveny park. SFVAS is an environmental organization committed to promoting conservation of our natural resources, increasing appreciation of bird life and promoting environmental education.

Subsequent to the *Martin v. Boise* 2018 decision, which ruled that unhoused folks are, as such, a protected class, enforcement of anti-camping rules in City parks was curtailed. Our area and its habitat, our organization and its members, as well as the public at large, including the LAUSD students who participate in environmental education programming at the Sepulveda Basin, have been adversely impacted by encampments.

Among the consequences of this suspension of enforcement are the following:

- Frequent fires in fire prone areas including our parks, including one recently which resulted in injury to 11 LA City Firefighters after something that had been hauled into an encampment exploded.
- A 2020 fire which destroyed over 80 acres of habitat in the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas and resulted in the death of an individual.
- Visitors to the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas have been confronted and terrorized by machete-wielding individuals living there in the underbrush.
- Increased vandalism of park property.

- Public health hazards from waterway contamination, household and hazardous waste, and fecal matter from encampments.

The risk to adjacent residential communities from a wind-driven brush fire originating in the Sepulveda Basin or Hansen Dam or other brush-heavy city park property cannot be minimized. Local communities have received evacuation alerts due to the fires in these areas.

The recent United States Supreme court decision *Grants Pass v. Johnson* overturned both the *Boise* and *Grants Pass* decisions.

SFVAS strongly supports the Los Angeles City Council motion in [CF 24-0140-S1](#) which requests first that the City Attorney analyze the impact of *Grants Pass* on existing Los Angeles City ordinances relating to sleeping, lying, and storage of property (Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) § 41.18, 56.11, and 63.44), and also on existing litigation related to such activities. Further, we support the directive to the Los Angeles City Chief Legislative Analyst and City Administrative Officer to prepare a report on current laws in the rest of the county which may impact the City of Los Angeles. We urge the Housing and Homelessness Committee to quickly pass this measure and send it to the full council with a request that all reports be prepared as soon as possible.

The SFVAS urges that the City restart vigorous enforcement of every provision of LAMC ordinance 63.44 relating to a prohibition on camping and depositing bulky items in our Los Angeles City parks, with a special concentration on fire-prone areas. We hope the City will efficiently offer options to house and provide necessary care for individuals who have been camping in the parks. However, the time is overdue to reach a balance between the needs of hundreds of thousands of park-poor residents and the very small number of people who insist on living where they should not be living and thus endanger everyone. SFVAS will strongly support efforts on behalf of the Los Angeles City Council, Fire Department, Police, Recreation & Parks, and Mayor's Office, and any and all other agencies to address this situation.

Thank you for your consideration,

Katheryn Barton, President
Patricia Bates, Conservation Committee Co-chair
San Fernando Valley Audubon Society