

MOTION

The Los Angeles Waterkeeper (Waterkeeper) recently released a report regarding the Los Angeles County Safe Clean Water Program (SCWP) and its performance in implementing stormwater capture and multi-benefit projects. The SCWP, passed by Los Angeles County voters in 2018, provides approximately \$280 million annually to local municipalities to construct these projects. The Waterkeeper report titled "*Changing the Course?*" assessed the Program's first three rounds of funding and its efforts in meeting water supply, water quality and community investment objectives.

The report notes that the extremely complex SCWP got off the ground and achieved notable success in less than four years, including earmarking and leveraging more than \$1B in funding for 101 infrastructure projects. At the same time, the Waterkeeper report also found some significant shortcomings in the Program to date. Most notably, the Program has failed to create significant new green space, while community investment benefits aimed at enhancing public health have also lagged, particularly in park poor and overburdened communities.

Another finding of the report is that the number of applications and size of funded infrastructure projects has been decreasing significantly over the past four years, perhaps suggesting early funding went to a backlog of shovel-ready infrastructure projects.

The report recommends, among other things, that as backlogged projects have cleared and fewer applications are forthcoming, the SCWP take a more proactive and strategic approach in devising regional projects which maximize water quality, water supply, and community benefits, especially in those communities most in need. In addition, as noted above, the report recommends that the SCWP pursue greater replacement of hardscape with new green space, particularly in park-poor communities and at schools.

During the first three years of the Program, the City initiated a number of projects funded by the SCWP. The majority of these projects have been on City park space, street corridors and near waterbodies. The projects have been implemented by various City departments and have been designed predominantly to meet defined and localized water quality and water supply goals.

The City's SCWP project planning efforts could benefit from a more strategic approach which develops regional projects in a manner that maximizes water supply, water quality objectives and community benefits. In addition, the City's SCWP project planning could pursue new green space projects by partnering with park-poor communities and local schools to deliver truly multi-benefit projects.

In order to achieve this, the Bureau of Sanitation, Department of Water and Power, the Bureau of Street Services, the Bureau of Engineering and the Department of Recreation and Parks, should collectively report on past successes and challenges within the program and methods and approaches to partner effectively and produce strategic projects that maximize the objectives of increased water supply, improved water quality and deeper community benefits. In addition, these departments should report on the feasibility of partnering with schools to create more green space. In this manner, the City can more effectively meet the needs of the City's residents and the goals of the SCWP.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council instruct the Bureau of Sanitation and the Department of Water and Power, in conjunction with the Bureau of Street Services, the Bureau of Engineering and the Department of Recreation and Parks, report to the Council within 60

PK

days on methods and approaches to partner, co-develop, and recommend strategic regional projects for inclusion in the 2024 Watershed Investment Strategic Plan annual update for the Safe Clean Water Program (SCWP) that maximize water quality and water supply objectives in a substantial way, including opportunities to leverage additional funding sources; and

I FURTHER MOVE that the City Council instruct the Bureau of Sanitation and the Department of Water and Power, and the above specified departments, report on the feasibility of initiating partnerships with the Los Angeles Unified School District, and non-governmental organizations, to implement green space projects using SCWP funding and other sources of funding in the schools and communities lacking park space.

PRESENTED BY:


KATY YAROSLAVSKY
Councilwoman, 5th District

SECONDED BY:



ORIGINAL

JUN 16 2023