

ARROYO SECO FOUNDATION

August 16, 2016

The Honorable Adam Schiff
2411 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: USACE Arroyo Seco Ecosystem Study

Dear Congressman Schiff:

I am writing to express my concerns and those of the Arroyo Seco Foundation about yet another delay in the US Army Corps of Engineers' Arroyo Seco Ecosystem Study.

The study, which you have long championed, was originally initiated in 2001 but has languished for many years despite wide-spread public support and your determined efforts. In 2014, however, we were encouraged that the study would be completed when the Army Corps developed a three year calendar for planning the long-term opportunities for environmental restoration in the Arroyo Seco. We were further encouraged by the progress of the Corps' LA River ARBOR study, a similar study that has resulted in a \$1.3 billion program to enhance an eleven mile stretch of the Los Angeles River including the confluence with the Arroyo Seco.

Early last year (2015) Army Corps staff promised at several public meetings that alternatives for the Arroyo Seco would be released for public review in March of this year. As recently as April 28 of this year, at a meeting of the Council of Arroyo Seco Agencies, Corps officials announced that their draft study, encompassing the Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP), would be available by July.

Now Corps officials promise that the TSP will be released in October. While LA County and local agencies, including Pasadena, Los Angeles, La Cañada, and South Pasadena, have reportedly been privately briefed on some elements of the Corps' planning for the Arroyo Seco watershed in their communities, there will be no opportunity for interested stakeholders or the general public to consider projects and alternatives before the Tentatively Selected Plan is released.

Representatives of the Los Angeles County Public Works Department, the lead local sponsor of the study, seem to be satisfied with the lack of public participation, since local agencies and the public will have the opportunity to adopt a "Locally Preferred Plan," similar to the Alt 20 program adopted by the City of Los Angeles for the LA River, after the Arroyo Seco TSP is released in October.

Even more disheartening than these most recent delays and the denial of public participation is the notice posted on the Corps' Fact Sheet on the project (<http://www.spl.usace.army.mil/Media/Fact-Sheets/Article/477380/arroyo-seco-watershed/>) that the federal agency “will seek a time waiver to meet the Corps' ‘SMART’ planning compliance,” which now requires that project planning and approval be wrapped up by October, 2017. I am concerned that the Corps’ failure to complete the study in compliance to their SMART planning requirements could lead to abandonment of the project. Such a resolution would be bitterly disappointing to those of us who have trusted the Corps and its local lead partner, Los Angeles County, for all these years to develop an ecosystem and watershed restoration program for the Arroyo Seco.

On behalf of the local communities and all the stakeholders who have worked so hard to advance this study, I urge you to take appropriate action to direct the Corps to complete the Arroyo Seco Ecosystem Study in a timely fashion and to ensure broad public participation in it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Tim Brick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Timothy F. Brick
Managing Director
(626) 639-4092

cc: The Honorable Judy Chu
The Honorable Xavier Becerra