

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR KATHRYN BARGER

NOVEMBER 7, 2017

Devil’s Gate Dam and Reservoir were built in 1920 and are located in the 47 square mile Arroyo Seco Watershed. This watershed includes the cities of Pasadena, South Pasadena, La Canada, unincorporated community of Altadena and the Los Angeles communities of Highland Park, Hermon, Mt. Washington, Montecito Heights, and Lincoln Heights. The purpose of the dam is to protect downstream communities from flooding and capture sediment and debris before it flows into the Arroyo Seco. Significant storms over the years have resulted in the build-up of sediment in the reservoir behind the dam.

The 2009 Station Fire and subsequent storms caused 1.3 million cubic yards of sediment to erode from the San Gabriel Mountains and deposit into the reservoir. In 2010, the Department of Public Works, on behalf of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District, proposed a large-scale sediment removal project at the reservoir. Citing constituent and environmental concerns, the Board of Supervisors directed Public Works to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and work with stakeholders to minimize the impacts associated with removing sediment from the reservoir. In 2014 the Board certified the EIR, approving the project alternative that significantly reduced the project’s impacts. In 2017, Public Works revised and recirculated portions of the Final EIR to further clarify the project’s mitigation measures.

In 2005, Public Works, on behalf of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began work on a joint study to identify opportunities for habitat restoration in the Arroyo Seco watershed. In 2014, due to limited funding, the study’s scope was revised to focus on the 10-mile reach of the Arroyo Seco downstream of Devil’s Gate Dam. In 2017, the Corps halted work on the study due to the lack of Federal funding. Completion of this study is a very important step toward a comprehensive approach to ensuring recreation, native habitat, and flood protection are maintained in the watershed.

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- M O R E -

The City of Pasadena owns and operates the Arroyo Seco Spreading Grounds, located at the upstream end of Devils Gate Reservoir. Maximizing stormwater capture has become more critical in maintaining a sustainable local water supply, including that within the Arroyo Seco watershed.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board take the actions necessary to approve Item No. 22 on today's Board Meeting Agenda, as specified in the Board Letter for that Item, which will authorize the sediment removal project to move forward while ensuring that all environmental impacts will be either eliminated or sufficiently mitigated, including the restoration of native habitat, currently degraded by non-native invasive species.

I, FURTHER, MOVE that the Board instruct and authorize the Director of Public Works, acting as the Chief Engineer of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District or his designee to:

1. Reduce the maximum total volume of sediment removed during the Project by 700,000 cubic yards, while maintaining the proposed footprint, so that instead of removing a maximum of 2.4 million cubic yards, plus any additional inflows during the Project, a maximum of 1.7 million cubic yards, plus any additional inflows during the Project, will be removed, and authorize the Director of Public Works, acting as the Chief Engineer of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District or his designee to make any necessary modifications to the Board adopted plans and specifications to accomplish this reduction in Project scope.
2. Assist the United States Army Corps of Engineers in completing the Arroyo Seco Ecosystem Restoration Study to identify opportunities for aquatic and riparian restoration along a 10-mile reach of the Arroyo Seco downstream of Devil's Gate Dam, including conducting outreach to local residents, and find that the District's participation in the study is statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act as a feasibility or planning study for possible future actions which the District has not approved, adopted or funded and for which environmental factors have been considered.
3. Execute any necessary agreements and amendments with the Army Corps of Engineers to assist in the completion of the Arroyo Seco Ecosystem Restoration Study, including the provision of funds for that study in an amount not to exceed \$2,500,000.
4. Coordinate with the City of Pasadena in an assessment of the feasibility of maximizing stormwater capture and groundwater replenishment at the reservoir and within the Arroyo Seco Spreading Grounds.

5. Provide the Board of Supervisors with an annual written report on the progress of the sediment removal project and costs incurred to-date.
6. Find that the reductions to the Project proposed in this motion will have the same, or reduced environmental impacts, as compared to the Approved Project, as detailed in ECORP Consulting, Inc.'s "Reduced Sediment Removal Alternative Environmental Review" memo, and further find that the Revised Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, Revised Environmental Findings, and Statement of Overriding Consideration are adequate for these reductions to the Project.
7. Delegate authority to perform all activities necessary to maintain the storage capacity at the levels consistent with today's approvals by the Board.

I, FURTHER MOVE that the Department of Public Works report back to the Board in 60 days on the feasibility of developing and implementing an early warning system to notify downstream residents and businesses of any issues related to Los Angeles County Flood Control District facilities, if needed and as applicable.

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