

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 14, 2022

CONTACT

Severn Williams

C 415 336 9623

sev@publicgoodpr.com

County Steering Committee Members Announce Joint Opposition to LA River Master Plan

Non-profit steering committee members that advised the County on the Master Plan send joint letter to County demanding their names be removed if County approves Plan as written

Los Angeles, Calif. – Today representatives from a number of environmental, environmental justice, and community-based organizations that have been working with the LA River Master Plan Steering Committee announced their formal opposition to the final Plan proposed by the County. The final Plan is expected to be approved at today's Board of Supervisors meeting.

These organizations submitted a [joint letter](#) that demands the County pull their names from the Plan's community engagement and Steering Committee section because of the Plan's support for adding more concrete to the river through massive projects such as platform parks, rather than investing in nature-based solutions and concrete removal for ecological and community resilience.

The joint letter was signed by East Yards Communities for Environmental Justice, Friends of the LA River, Heal the Bay, LA Waterkeeper, Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust, Trust for Public Land, Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples, and The Nature Conservancy in California.

According to Indigenous environmental justice organization, Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples, despite repeated requests, no Gabrielino Tongva tribal members were appointed to the steering committee, leading to the absence of diverse local Indigenous voices in the Plan.

"A river should have the right to be a river. At a glance the Los Angeles River appears to be owned, controlled and sickly. The health of the river determines the health of all life within and around it," explained Jessa Calderon, Water and Ocean Protectors Programs Coordinator, Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples. "The local Tribal community needs to be consulted at every step moving forward."

"A robust Plan for the river should prioritize local communities," added Laura Cortez, Organizer and Co-Executive Director, East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice. "The county needs to stabilize these communities by setting in place formal requirements and displacement protections for future river projects and needs to deal with long-standing contamination issues of the river and surrounding lands."

"Quite opposite from the outdated beliefs reiterated in the county's Plan, the LA River is so much more than just a flood control channel," said Marissa Christiansen, President and CEO, Friends of the LA River. "From both a scientific and an urban planning perspective, using nature-based solutions and targeted concrete removal to manage floods and remediate contaminated land are feasible, less costly than traditional methods, and are beneficial to local communities."

“The county should be prioritizing community, ecological, and climate resilience, not concrete,” added Bruce Reznik, Executive Director of LA Waterkeeper. “I’d like to see us truly working together to reshape the future of the LA River and local communities.”

The LA River Master Plan covers 51 miles of the river and addresses important issues such as flood risk, housing affordability, water quality, ecosystems, and park access. Members of the community are encouraged to contact the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors to advocate for the rejection of the proposed Plan in favor of a new planning effort that incorporates more meaningful community input, including from diverse indigenous voices, and one that prioritizes ecological and community health and resilience.