

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HILDA L. SOLIS

February 26, 2019

WHITTIER NARROWS DAM - IMMEDIATE FEDERAL FUNDING AND REPAIRS

The Whittier Narrows Dam and Reservoir is located between the Montebello Hills and the Puente Hills that form the southern boundary of the San Gabriel Valley in South El Monte, Los Angeles County. The Dam is located on the San Gabriel River and Rio Hondo approximately 11 miles east of downtown Los Angeles, approximately 7.5 miles downstream from the Santa Fe Dam. The area surrounding the Reservoir is densely populated. The Reservoir is surrounded by South El Monte (to the north), the City of Industry (east), Pico Rivera (south), and Montebello (south).

The Whittier Narrows Dam was constructed in 1957 and is owned by the Federal Government and operated and maintained by the United State Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The areas both upstream and downstream are highly urbanized with approximately 10 cities located between the Santa Fe and Whittier Narrows Dams and 25 cities between the Dam and the Pacific Ocean. The combined drainage area of the San Gabriel River watershed and the Rio Hondo sub-watershed is 556 square miles. The Whittier Narrows Dam serves an important life safety function through the

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flood risk management, protecting an estimated population at risk of 1.25 million with a population density of 2,645 people per square mile in the 25 downstream communities.

The Whittier Narrows Dam requires immediate major upgrades, retrofit, and rehabilitation work and is deemed by USACE to be at a very high risk of failure. The needed restoration and rehabilitation work is classified by USACE as the agency's highest priority nationally, due to the risk of very significant loss of life and economic impacts. Failure of Whittier Narrows Dam would endanger lives as well as property of the citizens of Los Angeles County. The estimated flood damages due to Dam failure are on the range of billions of dollars. Given the substantial life-safety and flood risk associated with this facility, immediate Federal investment to address the Dam safety issues is of utmost importance. It is estimated that USACE would need approximately \$600 million in federal funding to repair and upgrade Whittier Narrows Dam.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

- Direct the Chief Executive Officer, in coordination with the Department of Public Works, to send a five-signature letter to the U.S. Department of Interior and the Los Angeles County Congressional delegation requesting immediate allocation of funds to expedite the repairs and upgrades needed for the Whittier Narrows Dam.
- Direct Department of Public Works in coordination with the Office of Emergency Management to provide a report back in 30 days on County efforts to coordinate with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and downstream communities to ensure local measures are in place during emergencies.

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