

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS JANICE HAHN AND  
HOLLY J. MITCHELL

December 21, 2021

**Resolution of Acceptance of Grant Deed Modification for Bruce’s Beach**

On September 30, 2021, Governor Gavin Newsom signed SB 796 into law at the site that was once known as “Bruce’s Beach,” paving the way for Los Angeles County (County) to move forward with returning the land that was taken in an act of racism from Willa and Charles Bruce in the 1920s and deprived the public of equal access to the beach.

Senator Steven Bradford introduced SB 796, “Returning Bruce’s Beach to its Rightful Owners,” to eliminate the statutory restrictions previously placed on the land that prohibited the County from transferring the land back to the legal heirs of Willa and Charles Bruce. SB 796 passed through the California State legislature with unanimous bipartisan support, reaching the Governor’s desk on September 17, 2021. As an urgency bill, SB 796 took effect immediately upon being signed by the Governor, giving the State Department of Parks and Recreation until December 31st to amend the property deed and remove the restrictions placed on Bruce’s Beach. Once the deed is amended, the County will have the authority to transfer the land. To that end, County and State Parks and Recreation staff have prepared a deed modification document that removes the

MOTION

SOLIS	_____
KUEHL	_____
HAHN	_____
BARGER	_____
MITCHELL	_____

statutory restrictions prohibiting transfer. The State Director of Parks and Recreation has executed the deed modification, and it is now time for the County to approve and authorize the acceptance of the document so that it can formally proceed with plans to return the land.

Los Angeles County has the unique opportunity to rectify the historic injustice that was done to the Bruce family by returning the land to the legal heirs of Charles and Willa Bruce, from whom it was taken in an act motivated by racism and a desire to drive out a successful Black business and its patrons.

**WE, THEREFORE MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Find that the below actions are not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because they are activities that are excluded from the definition of a project by section 21065 of the California Public Resources Code and section 15378(b) of the State CEQA Guidelines. The actions involve organizational and administrative activities of government that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment. Upon the Board's approval, the Chief Executive Office will file a Notice of Exemption with the County Clerk in accordance with section 21152 of the Public Resources Code.
2. Adopt the attached resolution approving and accepting the State of California Grant Deed Modification relating to restrictions on the property commonly referred to as "Bruce's Beach" (Deed Modification), and delegating authority to the Chief Executive Officer or her designee, to execute, upon approval as to form by County Counsel, and certify acceptance of, the Deed Modification, and take any further actions necessary to ensure the recordation of the Deed Modification.

# # #

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
OF THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
APPROVING AND ACCEPTING THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA GRANT DEED  
MODIFICATION FOR BRUCE'S BEACH**

**WHEREAS**, Senator Steven Bradford introduced Senate Bill ("SB") 796, "Returning Bruce's Beach to its Rightful Owners," to eliminate the statutory restrictions previously placed on the land that prohibited Los Angeles County ("County") from transferring the land back to the legal heirs of Willa and Charles Bruce;

**WHEREAS**, SB 796 passed through the California State Legislature ("Legislature") with unanimous bipartisan support, reaching the Governor's desk on September 17, 2021;

**WHEREAS**, on September 30, 2021, Governor Gavin Newsom signed SB 796 into law at the site that was once known as "Bruce's Beach," paving the way for the County to return the land that was taken from Willa and Charles Bruce in the 1920s;

**WHEREAS**, as an urgency bill, SB 796 took effect immediately upon being signed by the Governor, giving the State Department of Parks and Recreation until December 31, 2021, to amend the property deed and remove the restrictions placed on Bruce's Beach;

**WHEREAS**, in enacting SB 796, the Legislature found and declared the following:

(a) The United States of America has never fully addressed the institution and practice of 250 years of chattel slavery; the ideology that established and maintained it has left an indelible stain on the fabric of this nation and is embedded in virtually every facet of American culture and civil society.

(b) The legacy of the intentional structuring of opportunity, implementation of policies and practices, and assignment of value based solely on skin color and other physical characteristics has created, and continues to create, unfair disadvantages for Black people.

(c) Racial discrimination has prevented entire communities of people from achieving their full potential due to its manifestations, including, but not limited to, the implementation of Black codes and Jim Crow laws, the widespread and accepted practices of lynching and sexually assaulting Black men and women, voter suppression of Black Americans, the false concept of separate but equal schools, state-sanctioned housing discrimination in the form of redlining and enforcement of racially restrictive covenants, disparate access to and substandard treatment within the health care system, police brutality in Black communities, the misguided war on drugs, and mass incarceration.

(d) Racism aggravates and exacerbates historical inequities and consequently deprives marginalized communities of access to land, economic opportunities, and a stable future.

(e) The experience of Willa and Charles Bruce is an example of how racism against Black people has reached crisis proportions and has resulted in large disparities in family stability, health and mental wellness, education, employment, economic development, public safety, criminal justice, and housing.

(f) In 1912, Willa and Charles Bruce purchased the first of two lots of land along the Strand in the City of Manhattan Beach and turned the location into a seaside resort that welcomed Black beach goers from all over and became colloquially referred to as "Bruce's Beach."

(g) In 1924, the Manhattan Beach Board of Trustees voted to condemn Bruce's Beach and the surrounding land through the power of eminent domain under the ostensible purpose of building a park. The true purpose of the Manhattan Beach Board of Trustees in condemning Bruce's Beach, as evidenced by historical materials, including those cited or discussed in the June 7, 2021, City of Manhattan Beach History Advisory Board Report that was adopted by the Manhattan Beach City Council at its June 15, 2021, regular meeting, was to shut down the Bruce's Beach resort because the Bruces and their patrons were Black. At the same time, the Manhattan Beach Board of Trustees enacted ordinances precluding the opening of any new beach resort in order to prevent the Bruces from relocating their business elsewhere in the city. As a result of these intentional racially discriminatory acts, the Bruces lost their land and their business, the Bruce family moved out of the City of Manhattan Beach, and the city immediately demolished the Bruce's Beach resort. Thereafter, in 1948, the city transferred this empty land to the state. In 1995 the state transferred this land to the County of Los Angeles subject to various deed restrictions that effectively precluded the county from returning to the Bruce family their wrongfully condemned land.

(h) Willa and Charles Bruce were deprived of their rightful property, as well as their right to derive the benefits of that property, including the freedom and fortune of operating their own business on their land.

(i) The fraudulent appropriation of land from private persons in general, and especially on the basis of race, is against the public interest and denies individuals and communities the right to enjoyment, the right to own property alone, as well as in association with others, the right to inherit, and the right to control one's property.

(j) Government has a responsibility to prohibit and eliminate racial discrimination in all forms and to ensure that all persons are entitled to security against forced removal, harassment, and intimidation by entities who seek to deprive individuals of their rights to self-determination and dignity on the basis of their race.

(k) Government must act in the public's interest to ensure that communities can fairly access justice and an effective remedy, including, when appropriate, the potential return, restitution, resettlement,

rehabilitation, or compensation, for unlawful and race-based displacements.

(l) The land in the City of Manhattan Beach, which was wrongfully taken from Willa and Charles Bruce, should be returned to their living descendants, and it is in the public interest of the State of California, the County of Los Angeles, the City of Manhattan Beach, and the People of the State of California to do so.


**NOW, THEREFORE, THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES DOES HEREBY PROCLAIM, RESOLVE, DETERMINE AND ORDER AS FOLLOWS:**

- I. **Incorporation of Recitals.** The foregoing Recitals are true and correct and incorporated herein by reference, and the Board of Supervisors adopts the findings of the Legislature set forth therein.
- II. **Approval and Acceptance of Deed Modification.** The Board of Supervisors hereby approves and accepts the State of California Grant Deed Modification relating to restrictions on the property commonly referred to as "Bruce's Beach", attached hereto as Exhibit "A" ("Deed Modification"), and delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer or her designee, to execute, upon approval as to form by County Counsel, and certify acceptance of, the Deed Modification, and take any further actions necessary to ensure the recordation of the Deed Modification.

The foregoing resolution was on the 21st day of December, 2021, adopted by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles and ex officio the governing body of all other special assessment and taxing districts, agencies and authorities for which said Board so acts.



CELIA ZAVALA,  
Executive Officer  
Board of Supervisors

By:   
Deputy

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

RODRIGO A. CASTRO-SILVA  
County Counsel



By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Thomas J. Faughnan  
Senior Assistant County Counsel

**RECORDING REQUESTED BY**

**State of California – Official Business  
Department of Parks and Recreation**

**Document exempt from recording fees  
pursuant to Government Code sections  
27383 and 27388.1 and documentary  
transfer tax pursuant to Revenue and  
Taxation Code section 11922**

**WHEN RECORDED MAIL TO:**

**County of Los Angeles  
Chief Executive Office  
Real Estate Division  
Hall of Records  
320 West Temple Street, Seventh Floor  
Los Angeles, California 90012**

**WITH A COPY TO:**

**TBD**

SPACE ABOVE THIS LINE FOR RECORDER'S USE

APN: 4177-024-900, 901, 902

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
MODIFICATION OF GRANT DEED**

This Modification of Grant Deed (“Deed Modification”), dated for reference purposes as December \_\_\_\_, 2021, by and between the STATE OF CALIFORNIA (“STATE”), acting by and through its DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION, and the COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, a body corporate and politic (“COUNTY”), Grantee under that certain Grant Deed dated as of September 15, 1995, and recorded in the Official Records of the Los Angeles County Recorder on September 19, 1995 as Document Number 95-1527005 (the “State Deed”), with reference to the following:

**RECITALS**

- A. Pursuant to Senate Bill 796 (Chapter 453, Statutes of 2021) which became effective September 30, 2021 amending Section 5002.6 of the California Public Resources Code, STATE and COUNTY are modifying the express conditions and covenants in the State Deed as to a portion of the property conveyed by said State Deed.
- B. Except as expressly provided otherwise in this Deed Modification, the State Deed remains in full force and effect, enforceable in accordance with its terms, without diminution or waiver of any kind of any right or remedy of the parties hereto and STATE and COUNTY hereby reaffirm and ratify the State Deed, as modified hereby.

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the above recitals, all of which are expressly incorporated into this Deed Modification, and the mutual promises and covenants contained in this Deed Modification, the STATE and COUNTY hereby agree as follows:


1. Pursuant to Senate Bill 796 (Chapter 453, Statutes of 2021), unless otherwise identified herein, the following express conditions subsequent and covenants within the State Deed are terminated only as to the property conveyed as part of said State Deed colloquially referred to as “Bruce’s Beach” and more particularly identified in the attached Exhibit A, consisting of 1-page and by this reference made a part hereof.
  - a. The real property and improvements herein conveyed shall be used, operated and maintained by the County for public recreation and beach purposes in perpetuity.
  - b. No new or expanded commercial development shall be allowed on the granted real property.
  - c. Any project for new or expanded noncommercial development on the granted real property shall not exceed an estimated cost limitation for each project of two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000), as adjusted annually to reflect the California Construction Index utilized by the State of California, Department of General Services. Any authorization for new and expanded noncommercial development shall be limited to projects that provide for the safety and convenience of the general public in the use and enjoyment of, and enhancement of, recreational and educational experiences, and shall be consistent with the use, operation, and maintenance of the granted lands and improvements herein granted in trust. The per-project limitation in this paragraph shall apply in the aggregate, so that not more than the amount specified herein may be expended for the project as a whole, regardless of any division of the project into phases or parts. “Project” means the whole of an action that constitutes the entirety of the particular type of new construction, alteration, or extension or betterment of existing structure.
  - d. The granted lands and improvements may not be subsequently sold, transferred, or encumbered. “Encumber” includes, but is not limited to, mortgaging the property, pledging the property as collateral, or any other transaction under which the property would serve as security for borrowed funds. Any lease of the granted land; or improvements shall only be consistent with the public recreation and beach purposes as herein conveyed.
2. Pursuant to Senate Bill 796 (Chapter 453, Statutes of 2021), notwithstanding any other law, easement, covenant, restriction, or servitude, the property identified in Exhibit A (or any portion thereof) may be sold, transferred, or encumbered upon terms and conditions determined by the Board of Supervisors of the COUNTY to be in the best interest of the COUNTY and the general public.
3. Pursuant to Senate Bill 796 (Chapter 453, Statutes of 2021) Section 2(h)(1), so long as the County owns the property identified in Exhibit A, the COUNTY shall

continue to comply with all of the above express conditions subsequent and covenants specified in the State Deed unless otherwise provided for within Senate Bill 796 (Chapter 453, Statutes of 2021) Section 2(h)(2) as to the property identified in Exhibit A.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, STATE and COUNTY have executed this Deed Modification as of the date first set forth above.

**“STATE”**

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA**  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
ARMANDO QUINTERO, DIRECTOR

By:   
Armando Quintero

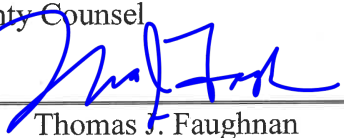
**“COUNTY”**

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES,**  
a body corporate and politic  
name/title

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Executive Officer

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

RODRIGO A. CASTRO-SILVA  
County Counsel

By:   
Thomas J. Faughnan  
Senior Assistant



**EXHIBIT A**

All of Block 5 in Peck's Manhattan Beach Tract, in the City of Manhattan Beach, County of Los Angeles, State of California, as per map recorded in Book 7, page 34, of Maps, in the Office of the County Recorder of said County;

ALSO the easterly 10 feet of that portion of "The Strand" adjoining said Block 5 on the West, and lying between the westerly prolongations of the northerly and southerly lines of said Block as vacated by order of the Board of Trustees of the City of Manhattan Beach, a certified copy of which order is recorded in Book 256, page 39, of Miscellaneous Records of said County;

ALSO that portion of 26<sup>th</sup> Place lying between Ocean Drive and Manhattan Avenue and lying southeasterly of and adjoining Lots 1 to 4, inclusive, in said Block 5, as vacated by Ordinance No. 407 of said City of Manhattan Beach;

Excepting from Lots 5 to 10, inclusive, the easterly 10 feet thereof conveyed to the City of Manhattan Beach for street purposes by deeds recorded in Book 6231, page 49, of Deeds, Book 6208, page 301, of Deeds, Book 6227, page 194, of Deeds and Book 6236, page 111, of Deeds.

CALIFORNIA ALL-PURPOSE ACKNOWLEDGMENT

CIVIL CODE § 1189

A notary public or other officer completing this certificate verifies only the identity of the individual who signed the document to which this certificate is attached, and not the truthfulness, accuracy, or validity of that document.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA,

County of Sacramento } SS.

On 12/7/2021, before me, Susan Saeteurn, Notary Public  
Date  
personally appeared Armando Quintero

who proved to me on the basis of satisfactory evidence to be the person(s) whose names(s) is/are subscribed to the within instrument and acknowledged to me that he/she/they executed the same in his/her/their authorized capacity(ies), and that by his/her/their signature(s) on the instrument the person(s), or the entity upon behalf of which the person(s) acted, executed the instrument.

I certify under PENALTY OF PERJURY under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing paragraph is true and correct.

WITNESS my hand and official seal.

Susan Saeteurn  
Signature of Notary Public

FOR NOTARY SEAL OR STAMP



OPTIONAL

Though this section is optional, completing this information can deter alteration of the document or fraudulent reattachment of this form to an unintended document.

Description of Attached Document

Title or Type of Document: \_\_\_\_\_

Document Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Pages: \_\_\_\_\_

Signer(s) Other Than Names Above: \_\_\_\_\_

Capacity(ies) Claimed by Signer(s)

Signer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

- Individual
- Corporate Officer – Title(s): \_\_\_\_\_
- Partner –  Limited  General
- Attorney in Fact
- Trustee
- Guardian or Conservator

Signer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

- Individual
- Corporate Officer – Title(s): \_\_\_\_\_
- Partner –  Limited  General
- Attorney in Fact
- Trustee
- Guardian or Conservator