

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR DON KNABE

February 24, 2015

On February 27, 2014, during a storm, a large metal-hulled vessel named “Angelique” broke anchor and washed up on the tideline at the northernmost portion of Dockweiler State Beach, just south of Marina del Rey’s entrance channel. The US Coast Guard and Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors, Lifeguard, and Sheriff personnel responded to the emergency and rescued the boat owner and his family, who had been living aboard the vessel. The American Red Cross provided the family with immediate shelter. Thereafter, the family moved away without leaving any contact information.

The 77-foot vessel continues to rest at the tideline and has become a visual blight and poses potential health and safety concerns. The vessel is no longer seaworthy and must be hauled off the beach for disposal. However, the removal of a vessel this size requires the expertise of a highly skilled marine salvage company and approvals from various federal, state and local regulatory agencies. The process is costly and exceeds the scrap metal value, which has led to the owner abandoning the vessel on the beach.

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On April 24, 2014, the Sheriff's Department provided notice to the vessel's owner, pursuant to Harbors and Navigation Code section 522, to remove the vessel within the time period as provided by the Code. However, the vessel was not removed and is considered abandoned property.

Jurisdiction in the vicinity of the tideline rests with the City of Los Angeles (City) and the State Lands Commission. The City has taken the lead in obtaining cost proposals and identifying a qualified and responsible marine salvage company, Global Diving & Salvage, Inc. (Vendor). The Vendor has assessed the situation and determined it is impractical to salvage the wreck, so the most economical and practical way to remove it from the beach is to refloat the vessel and tug it out for disposal at sea. The Vendor has cited examples of prior approvals for disposal at sea by the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

The Vendor has offered to conduct a turnkey disposal operation, which includes obtaining all relevant federal, state and local permits for disposal at sea, preparing the wreck for haul-out, and arranging for a tug boat to tow the wreck to the disposal site, for a lump-sum not to exceed cost of \$227,500. The City's Bureau of Sanitation has obtained approval from the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle), a California State agency, to use \$100,000 of a previous CalRecycle grant to the City to partially pay for this contract. The Sheriff's Department has obtained approval from California State Parks, Division of Boating and Waterways, to use \$80,000 of the Abandoned Watercraft Abatement Fund it has previously granted the Sheriff's Department to pay for this contract. The Department of Beaches and Harbors is willing and able to contribute the remaining \$47,500 from its operating budget to fully fund this contract to remove the wreck from the beach.

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The Department of Beaches and Harbors and the Sheriff's Department have been active participants in the effort to properly secure the wreck since it first washed up on the beach and will continue to provide any necessary support until the wreck is removed and the beach is restored to a safe and sanitary condition. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the County and City is being negotiated and drafted, which is necessary for the County to provide financial and technical assistance to the City for removal of the wreck.

The proposed project qualifies for a Class 8 Exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as it involves actions by regulatory agencies to maintain, restore, or enhance the environment, other than construction activities, where the regulatory process includes procedures to protect the environment.

**I, THEREFORE, MOVE THAT** the Board of Supervisors find the project Categorically Exempt from CEQA for the reasons here and above. I further move that the Board of Supervisors delegate authority to the Director of the Department of Beaches and Harbors and the Sheriff's Department to execute an MOU between the County and the City of Los Angeles 1.) to allow for the Department of Beaches and Harbors to expend up to \$47,500 and the Sheriff's Department up to expend up to \$80,000; and 2.) for the departments to provide technical assistance to the City, for the removal of a derelict vessel from Dockweiler State Beach, upon approval as to form by County Counsel.

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