

September 20, 2016

MOTION BY CHAIR HILDA L. SOLIS

Youth-Led Tree Planting Program

The San Gabriel Valley Conservation Corps' (SGVCC) First Supervisorial District Unincorporated Areas Tree Planting Program (Program) is a youth-led, community-centered effort focused on planting trees along roadways and parks in four unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County's First Supervisorial District: East Los Angeles, Walnut Park, Bassett, and Valinda. These locations have been identified by the Department of Parks and Recreation's Community Parks and Recreation Plans and by the Department of Public Works Road Maintenance Division as having a lack of tree canopy coverage and green spaces.

Trees are key to creating healthier neighborhoods, especially for the most vulnerable community members—the financially disadvantaged, the chronically ill, children, and the elderly. Trees cool urban areas by up to 10% by shading homes and streets, breaking up heat islands and decreasing heat-related illness and deaths. They help conserve energy, cutting summer air conditioning needs and reducing the carbon footprint. Trees filter water naturally and recharge groundwater rather than allowing polluted water to run off into the ocean. They clean the air by absorbing carbon dioxide and other pollutant gases and filter particulates out of the air. Finally, they provide a physical and psychological barrier between pedestrians and motorized traffic, increasing safety as well as making walking more enjoyable. The Program will increase the existing canopy coverage by creating greener streets that encourage people to walk and exercise, establishing green buffers from adjacent industrial uses, and focusing on other multi-benefit greening opportunities, including storm water capture.

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The Program model integrates the education and training of at risk youth and at risk young adults to implement four project phases: Street Tree Assessment, Education and Coordination, Tree Planting, and Tree Establishment. Over 50 miles of roadway will be assessed for street tree planting with thousands of new trees being added in unincorporated communities. A limited number of special Low Impact Development tree wells will be constructed in documented flood zones or high pollution areas. Door-to-door youth-led resident outreach will be conducted at multiple stages to inspire community members to want trees planted in front of their homes and encourage resident responsibility for tree care. Six community-based (CBO) partners from these four communities will be the key to recruiting ninety local youth and achieving community acceptance of new trees. Participating youth will receive a stipend, education, mentorship, an understanding of “Green Jobs” in the public and private sector, and a heightened appreciation for the natural environment.

The total estimated Program cost is \$1,160,000. A \$1,000,000 grant from the Regional Park and Open Space District will support the Program along with funding from the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA), which will be used to implement the tree education portion of the program. Rigorous evaluation of post-planting tree health and the program model will be conducted by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health in coordination with SGVCC.

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I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, ALSO ACTING AS THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGIONAL PARK AND OPEN SPACE DISTRICT:

1. Find the First Supervisorial District Unincorporated Areas Tree Planting Program categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act. The project, which consists of tree planting in unincorporated areas of the First Supervisorial District, Los Angeles County, is within certain classes of projects that have been determined not to have a significant effect on the environment in that it meets the criteria set forth in Section 15304 (b) of the State CEQA Guidelines, and Class 4 (c) of the County's Environmental Document Reporting Procedures and Guidelines, Appendix G, because the project consists of new landscaping. The project will not involve the removal of healthy, mature, and scenic trees. Additionally, the project is not in a sensitive environment, and there are no cumulative impacts, unusual circumstances, or other limiting factors that would make the exemption inapplicable based on the proposed project's records.
2. Allocate an amount not to exceed \$1,000,000 in Specified Excess Funds, available to the First Supervisorial District pursuant to the Los Angeles County Safe Neighborhood Parks Proposition of 1996, to the Long Beach Conservation Corps acting as the fiscal agent for the San Gabriel Valley Conservation Corps for the First Supervisorial District Unincorporated Areas Tree Planting Program.
3. Authorize the Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation, also acting as the Director of the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District, to award a grant when applicable conditions have been met, and to administer the grant as of the date of award and pursuant to guidelines in the Procedural Guide for Specified, Per Parcel, and Excess Funds Projects; otherwise funds shall remain in the Excess Funds account.

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