

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS JANICE HAHN AND
HOLLY MITCHELL

April 20, 2021

LA County Sponsor Senate Bill 796

In 1924, the City of Manhattan Beach used eminent domain to take land away from several Black families who had settled in the city, including the land commonly referred to as “Bruce’s Beach” that was home to a thriving beachfront resort run by Charles and Willa Bruce. It is well-documented that this move was a racially motivated attempt to drive out the successful Black business and its patrons. The land was condemned in 1929 under the guise of building a public park, but the land sat empty for decades as the Bruce family was forced to give up their successful business and move out of Manhattan Beach.

In 1948, the City of Manhattan Beach transferred the beachfront part of the condemned land, which included the former location of the Bruce’s resort, to the State of California (State). This land remained State property until 1995, when the State transferred it over to Los Angeles County (County) as part of a larger transfer of eight State beaches to the County. As a result, the 6,999 square feet parcel of land that was originally owned by Charles and Willa Bruce is now owned by the County and is the present-day site of the Los Angeles County Lifeguard Administration Building. Los Angeles County has the unique opportunity to rectify the historic injustice that was done

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to the Bruce family by returning the land to its rightful owners, the descendants of Charles and Willa Bruce.

When the land was originally transferred from the State to the County, it included conditions that restrict use and ownership of the land. In order for the County to be able to transfer the land back to the Bruce family, the State needs to remove these restrictions. Senator Steven Bradford has introduced SB 796, "Returning Bruce's Beach to its Rightful Owners," which will remove the plot of land from its statutory restrictions to enable the County to transfer the land to the living descendants of its rightful owners, Charles and Willa Bruce.

WE, THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors authorize the County of Los Angeles to sponsor SB 796 (Bradford) "Returning Bruce's Beach to its Rightful Owners" and direct the County's Sacramento advocates to take all appropriate legislative advocacy actions to support this effort.

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