

REVISED MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HOLLY J. MITCHELL

March 17, 2026

Fiscal Stewardship and Equitable Access in County Fee Waivers

At the February 3, 2026, meeting of the Los Angeles County (County) Board of Supervisors, the Acting Chief Executive Officer’s review of Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-26 projected year-end deficits exceeding \$200 million. The County’s fixed costs for FY 2026-27 are expected to outpace revenues, while reductions in federal funding and legal liabilities that pose significant fiscal risk are creating financial challenges that are expected to worsen next year. County departments are already doing more with less due to 8.5% curtailments, leaving little capacity to absorb additional revenue impacts. These fiscal pressures make clear that the County cannot rely on business as usual and must begin rethinking how it will sustain core services in the years ahead.

One area requiring immediate review is the practice of granting fee waivers for events at County facilities, which currently lacks standardized criteria. Fee waivers reduce costs for event organizers, support organizational sustainability, and can increase operational efficiency, and overall event success. When applied thoughtfully, fee waivers also promote equitable access by lowering financial and logistical barriers for residents, improving participation among families, economically disadvantaged communities, and volunteers supporting community-serving activities. However, the equity impact of fee waivers is influenced by several factors, including disparities in car ownership, transit

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access, digital and language barriers, and varying levels of familiarity with County opportunities.

Fee waivers also represent a direct loss of revenue for County departments at a time when every dollar counts. Continuing to approve fee waivers without clear limits or evaluation standards undermines the County's ability to stabilize its budget and protect essential services. In late 2023, several County Departments were asked to assess current practices for waiving parking and other fees for special events. The Chief Executive Office, through the Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiative and the Budget and Operations Management Branch, received data from the Departments of Beaches and Harbors, Internal Services, and the Library.

- From FY 2019–20 through March 2024, the County waived more than \$3.39 million in fees across 355 events, including \$2.36 million in parking fees ~~across 335 events~~. Notably, 73% of the total parking costs waived were concentrated in just 37 events, while many smaller community-based events received only modest support. Non-parking waivers such as gross receipts, facility, permit and docking fees totaled \$668,063, with 80% of those costs tied to only 27 events. This uneven distribution highlights a policy gap and raises questions about whether current practices align with the County's equity and fiscal stewardship goals. Given the County's severe budget constraints, continuing to waive substantial fees without a strategic framework is simply not sustainable.

While fee waivers can deliver meaningful public benefits, the data shows they are disproportionately allocated, with a small number of large events accounting for the majority of the waived costs. As a result, smaller organizations and residents who are less familiar with County processes may be unintentionally excluded. The County has an opportunity to strengthen its administration of fee waivers by establishing a centralized, CEO-managed approval process that ensures consistency, transparency, and alignment with equity and access goals.

To better understand how public benefits from fee waivers can be realized in a more consistent and equitable manner, the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) conducted a comprehensive review of its practices and developed a Business and Operations Plan (BOP) grounded in national best practices and extensive collaboration with Board Offices and community partners. The BOP provides a clear, accountable framework that advances equitable access while strengthening DPR's fiscal sustainability

and service delivery. It is now recognized as a leading model for balancing community benefit with responsible stewardship of public resources. Building on this foundation, DPR established the Core and Community Partnership Program which offers no- or reduced-cost access to park facilities for community-based organizations that offer youth- and community-centered programming aligned with DPR's mission. This model demonstrates that the County can expand community impact and protect equitable access while safeguarding long-term operational sustainability.

Given the County's budget crisis, fee waivers can no longer be treated as routine. They must be strategically evaluated and approved based on clear criteria that balance public benefit and equity impact with fiscal responsibility, cost recovery opportunities, and alignment with County priorities. When structured appropriately, fee waivers can be a tool that both increases revenue and expands equitable access to County facilities and assets.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Direct the Acting Chief Executive Officer (CEO), ~~through the Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion (ARDI) Initiative~~, in collaboration with the Directors of the Internal Services Department, Department of Beaches and Harbors, and Library, to report back to the Board in writing within 90 days on recommendations to establish a Countywide Fee Waiver Policy. The report should include but not be limited to:
 - ~~a. Design and development of a centralized review and approval process led by CEO;~~
 - ~~b. a.~~ Criteria to prioritize fee waivers for events with the greatest demonstrated equity impact, including but not limited to:
 - i. Events that improve quality and access to County services and public amenities (e.g. beach cleanup, public resource fairs);
 - ii. Events serving and directly addressing the needs of disadvantaged communities and/or low-income residents (e.g., homeless outreach events; community health fairs and clinics; food drives; education and training events; job fairs; art and cultural events; advocacy and safety workshops; re-entry events for justice-involved persons; and/or events for foster youth);
 - iii. Events offering activities that are open and free to the community

and/or where participation and entrance fees are affordably priced (e.g., less than \$10 per person); ~~and~~

- iv. Events occurring in communities with concentrated disadvantage (*i.e.*, high incidences of poverty, crime rates, or unemployment; lack of quality healthcare; lack of quality schools; high public assistance reliance; and high rates of serious health conditions or environmental hazards), or events led by community-based organizations that primarily serve these disadvantaged communities, or in areas that have historically received fewer County fee waivers; and

- v. County-sponsored events

- e. b. Eligibility criteria to determine which types of organizations (e.g., governmental entities, non-profit organizations, official County partners) and events may receive parking and non-parking fee waivers, including criteria for high-value waivers and repeat waiver recipients;
- ~~d.~~ c. Analysis and comparison of strategies to mitigate revenue loss, including fiscal impacts and tradeoffs, such as:
 - i. Capping the total amount waived per event, regardless of waiver type, especially for large-scale, revenue generating events;
 - ii. Capping the total amount waived as a percentage of gross receipts;
 - iii. Restricting gross receipt waivers to certain types of non-profit or public benefit events; and
 - iv. Partial or tiered parking waivers (for revenue share lots), transit incentives, or other alternatives to full parking fee waivers that may reduce fiscal and environmental impacts while maintaining access.
- e. d. Development of a centralized formal application process, and public facing materials that organizations can use to learn about and apply for fee waivers relating to County facilities;
- f. e. Formal tracking, monitoring, and annual reporting to the Board of all fee waivers as financial and budgetary line items, including the type of fee waived, dollar amount, requesting organization, event type, and

event location; and

- g. ~~f.~~ Development of a process that allows each Supervisorial District Office to approve fee waivers for events that do not meet established Countywide criteria, provided the Board Office commits to reimbursing the associated waived revenue using its discretionary funds.

~~2. Direct CEO ARDI to report back to the Board in writing within 90 days on an action plan to create and pilot the Countywide Fee Waiver policy, which will help the County's pursuit of creative changes for fiscal solvency.~~

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