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MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HILDA L. SOLIS SEPTEMBER 29, 2026

Ensuring Representative Leadership of the Environmental Justice Center

The Esperanza Hills Regional Park is the first regional park built in Los Angeles County in more than 35 years. It is located at the site of the Puente Hills Landfill, which was formerly the second largest of its kind in the country. It first opened in 1957 as the privately-owned San Gabriel Valley Dump and was purchased by the Sanitation Districts in 1970 to serve as a regional disposal facility. For 43 years, it accepted over 150 million tons of garbage until its final closure on October 31, 2013. During its operation, the surrounding working-class and immigrant families living in the nearby communities lived with the environmental injustices of the landfill's operations. This includes odors emanating from a high volume of garbage trucks heading to the landfill. Under a 1987 Joint Powers Agreement between the Sanitation Districts and Los Angeles County, as well California Assembly Bill 2632 authored by then-Assemblymember Hilda L. Solis, portions of the site were designated for park and recreation services once the landfill closed.

Upon her arrival at the County, Supervisor Hilda L. Solis then advanced the creation of the Puente Hills Landfill Park, which through community engagement would be named the Esperanza Hills Regional Park. This ambitious project is transforming the

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former landfill into a vibrant, accessible space for recreation, education, and environmental stewardship. Upon its completion, it will feature expansive walking and biking trails, picnic areas, and environmental education zones. The park will provide a space for residents to engage in outdoor activities, learn about environmental issues, and connect with nature in a historically significant area.

Central to this project is the newly completed Hilda L. Solis Environmental Justice Center (EJC). The EJC will be more than a building – it will be a new model for the County where people can gather, learn, connect with nature, become active participants in creating healthier and more resilient communities, and learn more about environmental education, community engagement, conservation, climate resilience, workforce development, and public health. It will be one of the County's cleanest and greenest buildings, incorporating sustainability and environmental stewardship into both its design and operations. Los Angeles County's Department of Parks and Recreation estimates that approximately 700,000 to 1 million children, families, and visitors could experience the EJC and the surrounding regional park each year, bringing together residents, schools, community, environmental experts, and public agencies around a shared vision of a healthier environment and greater access to nature. It will also recognize the generations of community members and advocates, whose decades of organizing and advocacy are embedded in the history of this project and helped make this transformation possible. The EJC can provide a space where that history is preserved, where community knowledge is valued, and where residents have a

meaningful voice in shaping the environmental future of their neighborhoods.

Importantly, the EJC will provide an opportunity for current and future generations to learn more about this history and the environment that surrounds them. The EJC will become a living classroom for children across Los Angeles County, and through field trips and hands-on learning experiences, students will have the opportunity to step outside the traditional classroom and experience environmental science firsthand. They can explore native plants and wildlife, learn about water and habitat, understand the connections between the environment and community health, participate in restoration activities, and discover careers in science, conservation, parks, and environmental stewardship. For many students, particularly those who may have limited access to natural spaces, this experience will be transformative. Over time, these experiences can help cultivate a new generation of environmental stewards, scientists, conservationists, and community leaders.

The capital investment is only the beginning. To fully realize the promise of the Hilda L. Solis Environmental Justice Center, Los Angeles County must identify a sustainable operating funding strategy that allows the facility to remain open, welcoming, educational, and well maintained for generations to come. Maintaining this facility while welcoming hundreds of thousands of visitors annually will require dedicated resources for operations, maintenance, educational programming, site stewardship, and staffing. Fortunately, there is a unique opportunity to align the EJC with existing community-benefit resources in the region. Several waste facilities provide community

benefits through tipping-fee revenues, and these resources have historically supported public park infrastructure, expanded programming, and additional staffing. In particular, tipping-fee funding available through the Avocado Heights/Athens Community Benefit Trust through 2035 can provide an important and appropriate source of ongoing support for the EJC's operations, maintenance, programming, and staffing needs. Investing these resources in the Hilda L. Solis Environmental Justice Center would create a direct connection between community-benefit funding and a public asset designed to deliver tangible benefits to children, families, schools, and communities. It would help ensure that the EJC does not simply open its doors but has the capacity to fulfill its promise.

The completed EJC's operating budget includes two executive level positions to oversee the Environmental Justice Center and the park overall. Given the unique nature of this space, dedicated leadership is necessary that recognizes the cultural and historical significance of this site both to surrounding communities as well as indigenous and Native/tribal communities, to ensure that its operation and further development continue to preserve and reflect historical community values, and to ensure the future of the park does not result in any inadvertent erasure of communities whose histories are interwoven with the park's location. Additionally, this park must fulfill its promise to children and future generations, requiring unique an operational structure unique to this facility, as it will be the first under the County's purview to offer educational curriculum, as well as exhibition green spaces that artists will utilize. The future leadership of this park and center must ensure that community voices remain at the heart of its operation

and development. Key community groups such as the Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority, the Sierra Club, educational institutions like Mt. San Antonio College and Rio Hondo College, as well as representation from tribal organizations such as staff from the Los Angeles County/City Native American Indian Commission must have their voices reflected to ensure their vision continues to be implemented in the project moving forward. Opportunities to identify the leadership of the Esperanza Hills Park and the Hilda L. Solis Environmental Justice Center must advance expediently, but also must ensure that community voices are engaged and inform the process.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors instruct the Department of Human Resources, in collaboration with the Department of Parks and Recreation, to:

1. Prepare job bulletins for the Regional Park Superintendent II position that will manage the day to day operations and programming of the Environmental Justice Center and Regional Park Superintendent III position that will manage the Environmental Justice Center and the Esperanza Hills Regional Park, which ensures identified candidates understand and recognize the cultural significance of the environmental injustices experienced by these communities, both past and present, and the roles the Esperanza Hills Regional Park and the Environmental Justice Center serves in correcting those historical wrongs, and immediately publicly post both bulletins upon approval of the September 29, 2026 Supplemental Budget, with a target date of initiating candidate interviews by November 1, 2026;

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2. Before holding candidate interviews, hold public community engagement sessions with impacted stakeholders, including community-based organizations that have been involved throughout the design of the project, as well as representation for Native and Indigenous peoples, such as staff from the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission, to gather input and directly inform the desired experience, leadership qualities, and community values that should inform the Department's selection process;
3. Incorporate the priorities from the community engagement process into the interview questions and evaluation criteria;
4. Ensure robust promotion, marketing, and distribution of the job bulletin to community and impacted stakeholders during the hiring and selection process; and
5. Report back in writing in 30 days after completion of the community engagement session describing the outreach conducted, the stakeholder input, and how the priorities were incorporated into the recruitment, interview, and evaluation processes.

I, FURTHER, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Find that the recommended actions to allocate and transfer funding for park operations are administrative activities of government that will not result in physical changes to the environment pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines section 15378(b) and are not a project pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21065

and are therefore not subject to CEQA.

2. Direct the Director of the Department of Regional Planning, or her designee, to allocate $584,000 if available, annually from tipping fee revenues deposited into the Avocado Heights/Athens Community Benefit Trust (Fund S3T) to the LA County Parks through 2035 to support the operation, maintenance, and year round programming of Esperanza Hills Regional Park and Hilda L. Solis Environmental Justice Center, which may include adjustments to salaries and employee benefits of at most five (5) CEO agreed upon staff at the EJC.
3. Direct the Executive Officer of the Board, or his designee, in collaboration with the Department of Regional Planning, to allocate the annual funding amount of $584,000 made available from Fund S3T to LA County Parks' Operating Budget through an annual Departmental Service Order or other appropriate budgetary mechanism, beginning in FY 2026-27 and annually thereafter through 2035, to reimburse LA County Parks for the actual cost of the five (5) CEO agreed upon positions for the operations and maintenance of the EJC, including Board-approved salary and employee benefit increases, subject to the availability of the tipping fee revenue.
4. Approve the enclosed appropriation adjustment to increase the appropriation of the Executive Office of the Board by $584,000 to effectuate the transfer to the Department of Parks and Recreation to fund the actual costs of five positions necessary to support the operation and maintenance of Esparanza Hills Regional

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Parks, fully offset by tipping fee revenues deposited into the Avocado Heights/Athens Community Benefit Trust (Fund S3T).

5. Direct the Director of Parks and Recreation, or her designee, in collaboration with the Chief Executive Officer, to monitor the annual costs of the five (5) agreed upon positions and prior to the conclusion of tipping fee funding in 2035, develop a plan to address the need for funding. If sufficient alternative funding is not identified, the plan shall include the discontinuation of the five positions upon the conclusion of the tipping fee revenues.

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