AGN. NO. _____

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR LINDSEY P. HORVATH October 6, 2026

Advancing Low-Carbon Construction in Los Angeles County

Los Angeles County is a globally recognized climate leader, nonetheless there is still substantial room to deliver on our commitments to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045. The OurCounty Sustainability Plan (OSP) and 2045 Climate Action Plan (CAP) have several goals related to transitioning to sustainable and healthy building design and construction, including:

- Expanding the use of sustainable building materials for County projects, including recycled and repurposed material, low-carbon concrete alternatives, sustainable pavement, renewable and biodegradable materials, energy efficient materials, and locally sourced materials (OSP Action 132)
- Adopting the CALGreen Tier 1 and where possible, Tier 2 statewide green building standards (OSP Action 34).
- Adopting a concrete code for new construction that limits embodied carbon emissions (CAP Action 3.2).
- Adopt reach code requirements that include performance standards to limit the amount of embodied carbon associated with construction (CAP Action 3.3).

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The carbon intensity of a building comes from both its construction and its greenhouse gas emissions during operations. Construction is responsible for 23% of greenhouse gas emissions globally, and the embodied carbon from cement manufacturing is responsible for an estimated 8% of global greenhouse gas emissions through limestone calcination and fossil fuel combustion in the high-temperature kilns that heat concrete to 1,400-1,500 degrees Celsius. The greater Los Angeles region has one of the largest concrete markets in the nation, with an estimated 15 to 20 million cubic yards of annual demand, the volumetric equivalent of pouring concrete for one Olympic swimming pool every two hours

Several state and local governments have set policy on low-carbon construction operations. In 2019, Marin County adopted a low-carbon concrete ordinance and required that all cement meet content or embodied carbon limits. SB 596 (2021) tasks the California Air Resources Board to develop a strategy to reduce the greenhouse gas intensity of cement used in California to achieve net-zero emissions by 2045. In 2022, New York City issued its Clean Construction Executive Order directing all City capital construction agencies to use clean construction practices and sustainable building materials, including specifications for low-carbon concrete through its contracts and projects. In 2024, the City of Santa Monica established Global Warming Potential limits and cement reduction mandates for concrete poured in all newly constructed private and public buildings. CALGreen, the State's green building code, requires large non-residential and school building products to reduce embodied carbon through various compliance pathways including the embodied carbon of building products and materials. Strategies to reduce emissions from concrete include use of supplementary cementitious

materials, plant electrification, alternative binders, carbon capture, utilizing recycled concrete aggregates and component salvage.

In May 2026, the US Green Building Council of California (USGBC-CA) in partnership with the County of Los Angeles, City of Los Angeles, and City of Long Beach issued a Request for Information (RFI) seeking commercially available and emerging low-carbon concrete solutions. Thirty unique market participants responded, indicating strong industry readiness to deploy low-carbon concrete in our market. The report found substantial availability of low-carbon concrete, but barriers for industry to scale – notably reliable demand. The RFI found that most regional cement plants already offer low-carbon concrete alternatives at or below conventional costs, which are estimated to be suitable for roughly 60% of concrete applications by volume.

This year, Los Angeles County Public Works is managing approximately $3.3 billion in construction contracts across approximately 130 active capital projects, a combination of “horizontal” infrastructure projects like roads, sidewalks, and sewer repair, and “vertical” projects including new office buildings, water treatment plants, and community centers. The County and our public partners, including Metro, have a tremendous opportunity to lead by example, move the market, and significantly reduce the environmental impact of construction, while avoiding cost increases. With the continued organization of USGBC-CA, the County should participate in a regional partnership across government and industry to collaborate on regional, performance-based low-carbon concrete standards, pilot project applications and qualified product lists, and other strategies to bring lower-carbon concrete to scale.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (DPW), in coordination with the Chief Sustainability Office, Internal Services Department, Los Angeles County Development Authority, and other applicable County departments, to report back to the Board in writing within six months with recommendations for a phased approach for reducing embodied carbon in County-funded construction projects. The report should at minimum consider criteria for new construction, substantial renovation/maintenance, and use cases for vertical and horizontal construction. If viable, the report should also include regional performance-based low-carbon concrete standards, qualified products list, and initial pilot application opportunities, as well as a medium-term goal of emissions reduction per concrete poured as part of a phased in implementation roadmap.

I, FURTHER, MOVE that DPW partner with the US Green Building Council of California, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the City of Los Angeles, the City of Long Beach, and other interested regional partners to share best practices and opportunities for regional harmonization to bring low carbon concrete to scale.

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