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MOTION BY SUPERVISOR LINDSEY P. HORVATH

Implementation of the Los Angeles County Water Plan: A Shared, Regional Path Towards Water Resilience

More frequent and intense wildfires; three years of drought, followed by intense rainfall; and recently, tropical storm Hilary, the first such storm to make landfall in southern California in nearly 100 years, all clearly demonstrate our region's vulnerability to the weather impacts driven by climate change. This unforgiving climate is testing Los Angeles County's (County) already strained and aging water system, including our polluted groundwater basins, and is exacerbating the lack of access to safe, reliable, and affordable water supplies in our most vulnerable communities. Climate change also puts at risk the imported water resources that make up more than 50% of our current supply, which has forced most County communities to adopt emergency conservation orders in the recent years.

Water management in the County is the responsibility of more than 200 agencies, yet there are many issues that are beyond the purview of individual organizations and are best addressed in a coordinated fashion at the countywide level. For these and other reasons, LA County Public Works, dozens of water professionals, community leaders, tribes, and an array of diverse stakeholders came together to develop the inaugural LA County Water Plan (Water Plan): to articulate a shared, inclusive, regional path forward to sustainably and equitably achieve safe, clean, and reliable water resources for the County. The result of their more than two years of work

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is before the Board of Supervisors today.

The Water Plan complements many existing local and regional water planning efforts by focusing on four key focal areas where experts and stakeholders agree new or additional collaboration is needed. Furthermore, the Water Plan builds upon and addresses many water management objectives of the OurCounty Sustainability Plan, such as development of a local water supply plan and providing support to small water systems. The four focal areas of the Water Plan are:

- **Regional Water Supply Reliability:** improving regional water supply reliability by better leveraging collective local and imported water resources and infrastructure.
- **Groundwater Management and Quality:** realizing groundwater management opportunities by sharing expertise and resources to improve stewardship and expand capacity.
- **Small, At-Risk System Resilience and Drinking Water Equity:** ensuring a consistently high standard of water service for everyone in Los Angeles County by providing regional support for small systems, with focused attention to under-resourced communities.
- **Watershed Sediment Management:** mitigating the impacts of wildfire on our water supplies through coordinated efforts between land and water managers.

For each of these focal areas, the Water Plan outlines targets and strategies, includes a two-year action plan, and is guided by the values of sustainability, equity, resilience, and

engagement to achieve these goals by 2045. The plan is a living roadmap that will be updated at regular iterations to address the evolving needs of our communities.

In 2017, just 41% of the County's water supply came from local sources. The OurCounty Sustainability Plan includes a target for sourcing 80% of water locally by 2045. The Water Plan articulates strategies to achieve the 80% target by generating 580,000 acre-feet annually, (roughly 162 billion gallons and enough to supply the water needs of five million County residents) of new, locally-generated water supplies by 2045.

Coordination between water agencies on drought messaging and public education is also critical given that people often live, work, and travel within distinct areas of the County, speak different languages, and have diverse cultural norms surrounding water consumption and conservation. Most water agencies in the County have developed their own patchwork of communication and marketing strategies, targeting customers with methods for conservation which are at best duplicative and at worst inconsistent and confusing.

Two of the themes guiding development of the Water Plan are sustainability and resilience. Nature-based water management solutions are increasingly viewed as an effective, multi-benefit approach to addressing water challenges. Natural or nature-mimicking water supply and water quality projects can provide multiple benefits such as creating recreational opportunities, flood control, carbon sequestration, habitat for wildlife, and addressing the urban heat island, but there is often disagreement about what "nature-based" entails and how to measure such projects' impact versus more traditional "grey" or engineered projects. More

consistent definitions and creation of standards are much needed and will benefit Countywide programs, including the Safe Clean Water Program.

Due in part to climate change, the financial health of the LA County Flood Control District (District) has been compromised. Significantly increased costs for projects such as reservoir restoration to address sediment accumulation from ever-increasing fire activity undermine the ability of the District to capture stormwater for beneficial reuse. Identifying supplemental revenue and funding will be critical to achieving the targets outlined in the Water Plan. These opportunities may include grants, partnerships with other water agencies, and pursuing legislative changes to the 1915 Flood Control Act to increase the District's federal borrowing capacity by hundreds of millions of dollars.

Achieving a resilient water future for the County requires us to actively implement the Water Plan. The County must both double the amount of water it captures from stormwater and double its current supply of local water supplies by 2045. And while government and water suppliers will need to direct significant planning and investment to meet these objectives, these goals around water resiliency cannot be met without far more effective and coordinated customer engagement strategies focused on conservation. This ambitious and necessary plan will set the County towards a resilient and sustainable water future.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct relevant departments to incorporate the goals and directives of the Los Angeles County Water Plan into their work plans.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Los Angeles (Board)

direct the Department of Public Works in coordination with the Chief Sustainability Office, Department of Public Health, and relevant County departments to:

1. Adopt a goal of achieving, in coordination with water agencies throughout the County, an additional 600,000-acre feet of local water supply including 300,000-acre feet of annual stormwater capture and storage by 2045; and to report to the Board, in writing, in six months on a plan to achieve this stormwater capture and storage;
2. In coordination with the Board, convene a Water Resiliency Summit with water agencies and stakeholders including consulting engineers, academics, agency technical staff, tribal organizations, community-based organizations, and labor unions from throughout the County to discuss implementation of the County Water Plan and launch its implementation, including the creation of thematic working groups;
3. Create and lead a Task Force to coordinate water conservation and drought preparedness communications and education countywide, leveraging Water for LA as a countywide communication hub;
4. Establish a Blue-Ribbon panel to develop standards for nature-based water management solutions, involving tribal, non-profit, academic, community, labor, technical experts, and water agencies, and report to the Board, in writing, within twelve months on the findings;
5. Establish and convene, on a bi-weekly basis (twice per month), a meeting of environmental and sustainability policy deputies from each board office, including

appropriate staff from the Chief Sustainability Office, Public Works, and other relevant departments, to discuss and coordinate environmental sustainability efforts at the County, similar to other reoccurring policy deputy meetings;

6. Report to the Board, in writing, in six months with funding needs and opportunities to achieve the goals of the Water Plan including grants, partnerships with other water agencies, and increasing revenue opportunities; and
7. Track and report annually, in writing, to the Board on progress toward achieving the Water Plan goals and targets.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Office, through the Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations Branch to pursue and sponsor State legislation to amend the Los Angeles County Flood Control District's borrowing capacity and authorize the County's Sacramento advocates to take all appropriate legislative advocacy actions to advance this effort.

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