

## Background re LA River Motion – Item 11.1 on 4/11/19 PPCC Meeting Agenda

### A. The Government Has Failed to Address LA River Flood Protection & Mitigation

- Los Angeles “River communities” (neighborhoods such as Atwater Village that are directly impacted by the Los Angeles River) are raising serious concerns about a failure by responsible government agencies (federal, County and City) to address necessary LA River flood protection and mitigation.
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) partners with the County and City on River improvement & revitalization efforts, but has control and authority over LA River Operations & Management (O&M). For almost three decades, USACE and its government partners have not followed-up on an extensive [1991 LA County Drainage Area Review Report](#). Important measures **to mitigate loss of life and property from future catastrophic flooding** were recommended in the Report but never implemented.

### B. Funding is Needed and an Updated Feasibility Study Should Be Conducted

- River communities have called for a **Flood Risk Management (FRM) Feasibility Study** to be conducted, but USACE has been insufficiently funded by Congress (according to the County divestiture motion referenced below, the agency receives only 10-15% of funding required annually for River O&M).
- The LA County Board of Supervisors has introduced a motion (Solis/Kuehl) requesting that USACE divest 40 miles of the River to LA County for the County Board of Public Works to take ownership and obtain primary authority for revitalization and flood control (see [Kuehl](#) and [LAT](#)). River communities support this measure, but divestiture (if it occurs at all) will take many years.
- River communities maintain that it’s important for LA City and County (as partners with USACE in River improvement efforts) to step up now and request that an FRM feasibility study be funded by Congress and conducted as soon as possible – and for all involved government agencies to remain active partners in a comprehensive endeavor to study and address flood control and related public safety issues arising since the 1991 Report (including effects of climate change).

### C. Why Should We Care?

- While Pacific Palisades may not suffer *direct* impacts from future catastrophic LA River flooding,<sup>1</sup> an unmitigated, devastating “50 year” or “100 year” flood event would obviously have an enormous negative impact on the lives and property of thousands of LA County residents and would almost certainly affect all of us in the City and wider region (with **taxpayers bearing the massive cost of repair and reconstruction**) – *think New Orleans and Katrina*.
- As a matter of responsible citizenship, WRAC leadership has recommended this motion to WRAC member councils.

*George Wolfberg, PPCC Chair & WRAC Representative  
Chris Spitz, PPCC Secretary & WRAC Alternate*

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<sup>1</sup> Santa Monica and Rustic Creeks are the two watersheds in our area and neither is connected to the LA River or its watershed. However, the Palisades is not immune to the impacts of catastrophic floods: In 1938 Santa Monica Canyon experienced destructive flooding from a 50-year flood event which inundated the area and caused extensive damage (see [photograph](#) in the Santa Monica Public Library Image Archives). The Santa Monica channel subsequently was lined with concrete—clearly visible next to Paul Revere Middle School. Major flooding in Los Angeles that same year was the impetus for USACE to line most of the LA River with concrete and turn it into a fixed-course channel as a flood control measure. *Eighty+ years later, it’s time for the Government to take the necessary steps to study and implement much-needed effective, modern flood control measures.*