

Public Comment  
Council File #12-0899-S1  
APHAR Committee Item 7, 8

Kristin C. Sabo  
Lake View Terrace, CA  
February 10, 2014

Position: **FOR this motion, FOR the “Optimum Investment” option.**

Chairman O'Farrell and honorable Committee members,

Our parks need the '**Optimum Investment**' plan outlined in the Ranger Status report before you today.

The City of Los Angeles Park Rangers are a California POST-certified agency. Park Rangers are highly trained multi-disciplinarian professionals whose job duties evolved directly from the day-to-day needs in our Los Angeles parks. No other agency can or does respond to these needs – specific parks needs - like Park Rangers.

Major job duties include:

1. Security and Law Enforcement
2. Firefighting
3. Search and Rescue
4. Community Policing
5. Wildlife Management
6. Education and Interpretive

Hansen Dam in CD 7 has a brand new Ranger Station and no full peace officer Park Rangers to man it.

I'm going to quote a public comment I made in 2008 regarding Hansen Dam, a Regional Park I live near and use frequently. We need full peace officer Park Rangers there with full police powers, not Public Officers with limited powers, and this is why:

*“Hansen Dam is a pedestrian and equestrian park, and it is in deep trouble. Park goers are in jeopardy every time they enter the park. A grandmother pushing her grandchild in a stroller was raped last week. Shots are fired regularly – I can hear them from my house. Comparatively, the percentage of murders, suicides, and drownings (“major incidents”) at Hansen far exceed the City parks average.*

(But you won't find them in the stats collected because OPS did not keep statistically significant information in this regard.)

*Illegal off-road vehicles use the environmentally sensitive area as a drag-strip at will. Equestrians have been thrown or chased multiple times this Spring alone. A young girl on a pony was intentionally surrounded by scofflaw motorcyclists with nefarious intent and was only rescued when a large number of other equestrians happened upon the scene. (the perpetrators got away scot-free.) Lewd conduct occurs frequently in a number of areas, some very near the Universal Playground and the Children's Museum. Scofflaws on foot and on horseback move*

*freely through the park with open containers, cigarettes, and illegal BBQs. A 20- something on an ATV tried to run myself and my horse down. He saw us at a distance walking on the haul road and opened the throttle full-out. I was on foot; I had my nearly blind horse in hand.*

*Just three days after the Griffith Park Fire was extinguished, Hansen was set abaze two days in a row. And on the 4th of July, it is only through the grace of Mother Nature that the park didn't explode in flames due to the illegal fireworks and a bewildering total lack of engagement by the other security agencies present. The three Ranger units present actively engaged the crowd for hours under extreme circumstances. I know, because I was there in the trenches.*

*Indeed, Hansen Dam is a park in need."*

The situation now with few Rangers and no proper Chief Ranger is that no one is home in these parks.

When no one is home... Parks users are not safe. Park inhabitants are not safe. Park resources are not safe. When no one is home, our fragile City resources are damaged and abused, costing even more funds to restore. Or they are damaged beyond restoration altogether.

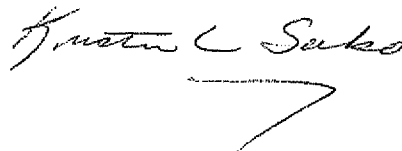
Sirs – Almost all of you have Regional Parks In your district and know the ongoing problems due to the lack of dedicated Park Rangers. Councilmember O'Farrell has Elysian Park. Councilmember Buscaino has Harbor Regional, a park that suffers from ongoing abuse of the environment and lack of safety. A Park that should be the next park to have a new Ranger Station. Councilmember Cedillo has historic Debs Park.

The only way Hansen Dam, Elysian Park, Debs Park, and Harbor Regional along with all of the other Regional Parks jewels in the city's parks system will get the help they need so that parks users are protected, educated and informed, and these resources are protected and nurtured is to choose the "Optimum Investment" option.

After nearly a decade of taking from our parks - \$155 million and 1/3 of the workforce since 2007 – it's time to INVEST IN OUR PARKS.

Choose the "Optimum Investment" option. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Kristin C. Sabo

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kristin C. Sabo". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name. Below the signature is a long, horizontal, slightly curved line that tapers at both ends, resembling a stylized underline or a decorative flourish.