

Andrea Ventura
4111 Chevy Chase Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90039

January 28, 2013

Councilman Ed P. Reyes
Ad Hoc River Committee
Los Angeles City Council
200 N. Spring Street, Room 410
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Los Angeles River Recreational Zone Pilot Program

Dear Councilman Reyes and Members of the Ad Hoc River Committee:

As a resident of Atwater Village who uses the Los Angeles River daily, I oppose the current Los Angeles River/Glendale Narrows Recreation Zone Pilot Program dated January 15, 2013. The draft program prohibits "dogs and pets" from using the "new recreational zone." If implemented as is, this prohibition will likely violate the Public Trust Doctrine as well as equal protection rights guaranteed by the State and Federal Constitution.

After I purchased my house on Chevy Chase Drive four years ago, I have been walking or running with my dog along the Los Angeles River daily. As part of my daily recreational exercise, I encounter dozens of other residents or visitors walking their dogs along the river as well. Not once have I witnessed any destruction or safety problems as a result of any dog for the past four years. All the dog owners and dog walkers I meet thoroughly enjoy the river with their pet. This daily observation supports what I witnessed for decades in the past, when I would come to the Los Angeles River to walk before I adopted my dog from the pound. Not once in the past 15 years have I found any habitat destroyed or safety threatened by a dog.

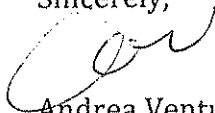
I am not against a plan to encourage kayakers and boaters to enjoy and use the Los Angeles River. I fully support it. But I am against a plan to promote kayaking at the expense of walking and/or running dogs along the river. The latest draft of the Los Angeles River/Glendale Narrows Recreation Zone Pilot Program prohibits dogs entirely. In essence, this prohibition restricts one form of public use to promote another. This is unfair.

Moreover, this particular proposed prohibition is not required under the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority Ordinance, which apparently governs this new pilot. Rather, section 3.9 of the Ordinance provides for owners to bring dogs to park lands as long as the owners and dogs comply with certain

restrictions. One restriction allows dogs with leashes. Another allows a dog off leash "so long as the owner or person in possession of the dog (1) exercises the degree of control that enables such person to recall the dog on command and (2) has a leash on his person at all times so as to be able to restrain the dog if necessary." (MCRA Ordinance §3.9(g).) This is exactly what I have done with my dog along the Los Angeles River for the past four years. It is what hundreds, or even thousands, of residents have done for decades.

Moreover, as currently worded, the new regulations prohibit dogs from the recreational zone but not horses (unless horses are considered "pets"). Currently, dogs walk and run along the river with their owners. So do horses. If the plan prohibits dogs and not horses, there are equal protection violations at issue with these new regulations. Accordingly, it would be sound to reconsider this particular prohibition. It will disrupt not only my daily enjoyment of the Los Angeles River but hundreds or even thousands of others who currently enjoy the Los Angeles River.

Sincerely,



Andrea Ventura
Atwater Village Resident
Attorney at Law