

Dear Honorable Council Members:

Our organization learned only this morning of this vote. Our principal area of interest is the Ballona Wetlands, however we have a broader interest in conservation issues across the greater Los Angeles area that could impact the greater Ballona ecosystem with regard to policy precedent, impact on migrating and resident birds, etc. According to the public comment document on the City's web site, only one public comment was received. Clearly, this is inadequate to satisfy the intent of CEQA for robust public participation.

Our organization is governed by a seven member Board of Directors. As such, I can not comment directly until the Board has a chance to discuss the initial study and mitigated negative declaration. However, I can speak generally in expressing concern that such a significant project will not have the benefit of a full EIR/EIS. The mere project title "Bend the River," along with project elements such as the excavation of a 1,300-cubic-yard pit and installation of an inflatable dam, suggest that a more thorough environmental analysis is required. We are especially concerned that only four paragraphs were devoted to biological resources, and only one species of bird was referenced.

Because this item is #31 on today's agenda, it is our hope that your staff will have a chance to communicate these comments to you prior to any vote. In the meantime, we will analyze the project documents in more detail and evaluate our options depending on the outcome of today's meeting.

Regards,

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