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# California State Senate

SENATOR  
KEVIN DE LEÓN  
CHAIR

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November 5, 2013

Lieutenant General Thomas Bostick  
Commanding General  
United States Army Corp of Engineers  
441 G Street NW  
Washington, DC 20314-1000

**RE: Los Angeles River: ARBOR Study – Support for Alternative 20 (RIVER)**

Dear Commanding General Bostick:

I am writing to strongly urge the United States Army Corps of Engineers to select Alternative 20 – Riparian Integration via Varied Ecological Reintroduction (RIVER) – as the preferred alternative to restore the 11 miles of the Los Angeles River included in the “Area with Restoration Benefits and Opportunities for Revitalization (ARBOR)” reach study and detailed in the draft Integrated Feasibility Report (IFR). I greatly appreciate the efforts of the City of Los Angeles and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to develop a plan to restore and revitalize the Los Angeles River that would be consistent with the goals of the City of Los Angeles’ Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan for the river. As a strong proponent of efforts to restore the Los Angeles River, I support Alternative 20 (RIVER) as it provides the most extensive restoration of the river and integration into adjacent neighborhoods, the majority of which I represent.

Spurred by the efforts of individuals and organizations, such as the Friends of the Los Angeles River, Los Angeles has witnessed a strong and growing interest to restore and revitalize the river to a more ecological natural state. These efforts have coincided with a greater awareness about the lack of open space in many nearby neighborhoods, which would be well-served by a restored and revitalized Los Angeles River. Unfortunately, the City of Los Angeles has the unfortunate distinction of being one of the largest cities in the United States with the least amount of park and open space.

In response to the glaring need for additional park space in Los Angeles, I have pushed forth state policies to support efforts to provide sorely needed open space and help revitalize the river. My efforts have included helping to channel necessary state funding to key sites along the river, including \$21 million for the development of the Los Angeles State Historic Park.



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Additionally, I authored legislation, California Senate Bill 1201 (De Leon), that codifies the river's status as a navigable water of the state protected under the State Constitution, which was signed into the law in 2012. This legislation, cited in the ARBOR study, is an important effort by the State of California to recognize the importance of the Los Angeles River as more than just a flood control system.

Alternative 20 (RIVER) best represents the vision of the people of Los Angeles for the Los Angeles River. Unlike the other alternatives, Alternative 20 includes connections to significant key sites along the river, including the Los Angeles State Historic Park and the Verdugo Wash. The Los Angeles State Historic Park, in particular, is a critically important site in the community of Chinatown in downtown Los Angeles. The Los Angeles State Historic Park, known locally as the "Cornfield," was the result of a historic partnership between the Latino and Asian American communities in my district that formed the coalition Chinatown Yard Alliance to prevent the development of this 32-acre site into industrial warehouses. The acquisition of this land by the state of California is renowned as one of the most significant environmental justice victories in Los Angeles, and has served as a catalyst for the revitalization of the Los Angeles River. Selecting an alternative that fails to include this key site would be a disservice to the community. Alternative 20 is the only alternative incorporating the Los Angeles State Historic Park in the revitalization of the river, providing for the restoration of wetlands with a terraced connection from the park to the mainstem of the river.

While other alternatives may be less expensive, the benefits of Alternative 20 (RIVER) best meet the needs of Los Angeles. Alternative 20 (RIVER) ensures the greatest increase in habitat restoration, connection to the neighborhoods, connectivity along the 11 mile stretch of the river, and potential for 10,000 more jobs than Alternative 13. As such, it would be a great disappointment for the US Army Corps to move forward with a preference for Alternative 13, an inadequate representation of the needs and desires of the community.

For these reasons, I urge you to support ARBOR study Alternative 20 (RIVER) to ensure we maximize our federal and local investment dollars and restore the Los Angeles River as a functional ecological system and a resource to the local community. Please feel free to contact me or Nidia Bautista on my staff at (916) 651-4022, if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,



**KEVIN DE LEÓN**

**Twenty-Second Senate District**

**Commanding General Bostick --- *ARBOR Study Support for Alternative 20***

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cc: Honorable Diane Feinstein, United States Senator  
Honorable Barbara Boxer, United States Senator  
Honorable Xavier Becerra, U.S. House of Representatives (CA – 34<sup>th</sup> District)  
Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard, U.S. House of Representatives (CA – 40<sup>th</sup> District)  
Honorable Adam Schiff, U.S. House of Representatives (CA – 28<sup>th</sup> District)  
Honorable Jimmy Gomez, California State Assembly (51<sup>st</sup> District)  
Honorable Eric Garcetti, Mayor of Los Angeles  
Honorable Gilbert Cedillo, Los Angeles City Council, 1<sup>st</sup> District  
Honorable Mitch O'Farrell, Los Angeles City Council, 13<sup>th</sup> District  
Nancy Sutley, Chair, White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ)