



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

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July 29, 2008

IN REPLY PLEASE
REFER TO FILE: **WR-2**

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**SANTA ANITA FIRE PUBLIC SAFETY EMERGENCY PROTECTION MEASURES
AUTHORIZE TO DESIGN, CONSTRUCT, AND SECURE FEDERAL FUNDS
CITY OF SIERRA MADRE AREA
(SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT 5)
(3 VOTES)**

SUBJECT

This action is to authorize the emergency construction of public safety protection measures at various locations in the 2008 Santa Anita Fire area (City of Sierra Madre) and serve as public sponsor for grant submittals to the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the State Office of Emergency Services in order to secure Federal funds for public safety protection measures.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD ACTING AS THE GOVERNING BODY
OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT:**

1. Find that the proposed projects are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act for the reasons stated in this letter and in the project records.
2. Find that the public interest and necessity demand the following immediate actions to protect residents in the City of Sierra Madre from the effects of the April 2008 Santa Anita Fire:

- a. Install three rail and timber structures at various locations in the City of Sierra Madre; and
 - b. Enlarge Sturtevant Debris Basin and its debris dam.
3. Approve the project and authorize the Acting Chief Engineer or his designee to design, acquire the necessary rights of way and permits, and install three rail and timber structures using in-house forces and an estimated \$900,000 of Los Angeles County Flood Control District funds, and authorize the County of Los Angeles Internal Services Department to expedite all associated procurement of materials.
4. Delegate authority to the Acting Chief Engineer or his designee, on behalf of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District, to acquire the necessary rights of way and permits, and enter into an agreement with the City of Sierra Madre, if necessary, for the enlargement of Sturtevant Debris Basin.
5. Delegate authority to the Acting Chief Engineer or his designee, on behalf of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District, to execute an emergency construction contract in an amount not to exceed \$1,500,000 for the enlargement of Sturtevant Debris Basin.
6. Authorize the Acting Chief Engineer or his designee, on behalf of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District, to submit grant applications to the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the State Office of Emergency Services in order to secure Federal funds for the three rail and timber projects and the enlargement of Sturtevant Debris Basin.
7. Approve an exception to the County's grant policy by authorizing the Acting Chief Engineer or his designee to accept the grants from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the State Office of Emergency Services for these projects.
8. Delegate authority to the Acting Chief Engineer or his designee, on behalf of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District, to conduct business with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the State Office of Emergency Services on any and all matters related to the grant funds for these projects, including

negotiating and executing grant agreements and signing requests for reimbursement.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

The purpose of the recommended actions is to protect residents in the City of Sierra Madre from the effects of the April 2008 Santa Anita Fire and allow the Acting Chief Engineer or his designee to apply for grants for up to 75 percent of the cost of installing the mudflow protection measures from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the State Office of Emergency Services (OES). The Santa Anita Fire burned approximately 584 acres, of which 384 acres were in the City of Sierra Madre. Sediment production increases dramatically when a watershed burns, and a moderate storm could deliver tens of thousands of cubic yards of sediment to residences at various locations in the City of Sierra Madre. Enlarging Sturtevant Debris Basin and installing three rail and timber structures below the burned watersheds will provide a substantial level of mudflow protection. To facilitate formal acceptance of the grants in order to secure Federal funds for these public safety protection measures, the Los Angeles County Flood Control District (LACFCD) is recommending that, for these projects, your Board approve an exception to the County's grant policy requiring the grants to be accepted by your Board. Specifically, it is recommended that the Acting Director of Public Works be permitted to accept the grants on behalf of the County.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

The Countywide Strategic Plan directs that provision of Service Excellence (Goal 1) and Community Services (Goal 6) by expeditiously implanting mudflow protection measures to protect LACFCD residents and Fiscal Responsibility (Goal 4) by utilizing, in part, external funding sources to finance the installation of the protective measures.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

There will be no impact to the County General Fund. The estimated cost to complete this work is \$2,400,000 of which \$1,500,000 is for enlarging Sturtevant Debris Basin and \$900,000 is for installing three rail and timber structures. Funding for this work is available in the Fiscal Year 2008-09 Flood Control District Budget.

Public Works will seek reimbursable funding for up to 75 percent of the cost of installing the mudflow protection measures from the NRCS, FEMA, and the State OES. The Governor's OES has approved the Notice of Interest submitted by the LACFCD for potential Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funding to enlarge Sturtevant Debris Basin.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The Santa Anita Fire started on April 26, 2008, and was contained on May 1, 2008. The burned area extended into the Angeles National Forest, all of which are watersheds that are tributary to the City of Sierra Madre.

During significant storm events, sediment flows from the burned watersheds will impact several areas in the City of Sierra Madre. Some of the burned watersheds are tributary to existing debris control facilities maintained by Public Works, and other areas are below burned watersheds that have insufficient or no mudflow protective facilities.

Sturtevant Debris Basin is an existing debris control facility maintained by Public Works that has insufficient capacity to capture the volume of sediment that is anticipated to flow into the basin. If the basin overflows, sediment will likely impact several residences below and plug the outlet drain from the debris basin. Public Works is recommending delegated authority to execute an emergency contract on behalf of the LACFCD to enlarge the basin to its standard level of protection in order to prevent damages to residences and protect life. Public Works will identify three or four highly qualified contractors who have successfully performed similar work for Public Works in the past and request each to submit a bid based on project design plans and specifications by a specified date. Public Works will evaluate the bids and select the contractor using established procedures.

For the three locations that are below burned watersheds with no mudflow protection, Public Works is recommending delegated authority to use its work forces to design, construct, and acquire the necessary rights of way and permits for three rail and timber structures to ensure timely installation of mudflow protection. In addition, Public Works is recommending Board authorization for the Internal Services Department (ISD) to expedite all associated procurement of all materials needed for the installation.

All grant agreements will be reviewed and approved as to form by County Counsel prior to execution by the Acting Chief Engineer or his designee.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

The proposed project is statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The construction of the rail and timber structures and the enlargement of Sturtevant Debris Basin, including securing funding for these activities, are specific actions necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency due to flooding and mudflows,

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which may result from significant rains in the burned area pursuant to Section 15269(c) of CEQA. The installation of the mudflow protective measures will provide protection to residents in advance of and during the upcoming storm season.

CONTRACTING PROCESS

The Acting Chief Engineer or his designee is recommending delegated authority from your Board to execute an emergency contract to enlarge Sturtevant Debris Basin through emergency contract procedures on behalf of the LACFCD. Public Works will identify three or four highly qualified contractors who have successfully performed similar work for Public Works in the past and request each to submit a bid based on project design plans and specifications by a specified date. Public Works will evaluate the bids and select the contractor using established procedures. Emergency contract procedures are the only viable means of ensuring the enlargement is completed as soon as possible since the next storm season begins on October 15, 2008.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

The installation of the three rail and timber structures and enlarging Sturtevant Debris Basin will provide mudflow protection to residents living below the recently burned watersheds in the Santa Anita Fire area.

CONCLUSION

Please return one adopted copy of this letter to the Department of Public Works, Water Resources Division, and one adopted copy to the Internal Services Department.

Respectfully submitted,



DEAN D. EFSTATHIOU
Acting Director of Public Works

DDE
RHK:vr

c: County Counsel
Internal Services Department