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CONTACT

- Alison Simard, Director of Marketing & Communications, Heal the Bay
ASimard@healthebay.org, O: 310-451-1500, C: 323-445-8402
- Kari Birdseye, NRDC, kbirdseye@nrdc.org, 415-875-8243
- Nina Erlich-Williams, Public Good PR for LA Waterkeeper,
nina@publicgoodpr.com, O: 510-336-9566, C: 415-577-1153

WATER ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS OUTLINE BOLD STORMWATER CAPTURE, CLEAN-UP TARGETS AND TIMELINES

Groups share recommended targets and approaches with LA County leaders

Los Angeles, Calif. – Today, three of the LA region’s leading water advocacy organizations shared a new report with LA County decision makers tasked with overseeing the ambitious [Safe, Clean Water Program](#). The program provides \$280 million annually in dedicated funding to increase local water supplies, improve water quality, and protect public health through enhanced stormwater capture capabilities. [Vision 2045: Thriving in a Hotter and Drier LA County through Local Stormwater Capture and Pollutant Reduction](#) is intended to catalyze county efforts to ensure the Safe, Clean Water Program reaches its goals more quickly and definitively. The timing of the release of this document corresponds with the pending LA County Board of Supervisors vote on December 5th to approve the [LA County Water Plan](#) that builds on their goal of 80% local water supplies by 2045.

NRDC, Heal the Bay, and LA Waterkeeper worked together to develop Vision 2045. The document identifies specific metrics for reaching interim and long-term targets related to water supply, water quality, environmental justice for disadvantaged communities, and making schools and communities greener throughout the county.

“The voters overwhelmingly supported the Safe, Clean Water Program funding measure in order to help drought proof the LA region and to clean up our long-polluted rivers, lakes and coastal waters to make them safe for people and aquatic life,” said Dr. Mark Gold, Water Scarcity Solutions Director at NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council). “Our groups worked together to develop the Vision 2045 document with numeric targets and milestones that will transform the region into a greener, safer, more climate resilient Los Angeles County if fully implemented.”

The Safe, Clean Water Program, created by Measure W in 2018, is undergoing its first Biennial Review. This assessment process gives LA County a chance to identify what parts of the program are working well and where there are opportunities for improvement.



“Los Angeles is already experiencing the climate crisis, from drought to wildfire to extreme heat. The Safe, Clean Water Program has had some success in its first 4 years, but more must be done to deliver on the promises made to voters in 2018 when they approved Measure W,” said Annelisa Moe, Heal the Bay’s Associate Director of Science & Policy, Water Quality. “Vision 2045 reflects the urgency needed to ensure all communities are more climate resilient, and it offers the roadmap we need to accelerate the equitable transition to a more water secure LA County.”

“The County has done a terrific job in getting this complex and ambitious program off the ground,” noted Bruce Reznik, executive director of LA Waterkeeper. “But without measurable goals identified, it’s hard to know whether we are on track to improve water quality, increase local water independence, and expand access to green space in disadvantaged communities as intended. The Vision 2045 document offers the County specific ideas about how to set those targets and measure progress in an ongoing way.”

With climate change accelerating, one of the most cost-effective ways to ensure Angelenos will continue to have the water they need to thrive in the decades to come is to make the most of every drop of rain that falls. The groups that drafted this vision document note there is a real urgency to ensure the Safe, Clean Water Program is implemented in a way that is both effective and equitable. Among other goals, it calls for a target of an additional 300,000 acre-feet of stormwater to be captured and put to use every year by 2045. The document also calls on the county to aggressively reduce water pollution [by complying with state deadlines](#), and ensure that at least 10% of projects in disadvantaged communities that are funded through the program are led by community based organizations, to ensure robust community involvement.

The vision document also proposes a target of replacing 12,000 acres of impermeable surfaces with new green space by 2045: a nature-based solution that provides recreation, open space, public health benefits and more. It calls for all schools located within the boundaries of state-defined disadvantaged communities to become [green schools](#) by 2030, with all LA County schools meeting that target no later than 2045. Vision 2045 also sets a target of developing an outreach plan to actively engage local tribes in program implementation by the end of next year.

The Safe, Clean Water Program is administered by LA County’s Flood Control District under the supervision of the Board of Supervisors. Recommendations for specific updates to program implementation are expected to be presented to the Board of Supervisors in early 2024.

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NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council) is an international nonprofit environmental organization with more than 3 million members and online activists. Established in 1970, NRDC uses science, policy, law, and people power to confront the climate crisis, protect public health, and safeguard nature. NRDC has offices in New York City, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Bozeman, MT, Beijing and Delhi (an office of NRDC India Pvt. Ltd). Visit us at www.nrdc.org and follow us on Twitter @NRDC.

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Heal the Bay: Heal the Bay is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization founded in 1985. They use science, education, community action, and advocacy to fulfill their mission to protect coastal waters and watersheds in Southern California with a particular focus on public health, climate change, biodiversity, and environmental justice. Heal the Bay Aquarium, located at the Santa Monica Pier, welcomes 100,000 guests annually and hosts a variety of public programs and events that highlight local environmental issues and solutions. Learn more at healthebay.org and follow @healthebay on social media.