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August 17, 2017

Keith Lilly, Project Manager
Devil's Gate Sediment Removal Project
Los Angeles County Department of Public Works/
Flood Control District
900 South Fremont Avenue
Alhambra, California 91803

Dear Keith:

It's so unfortunate that we are still at it -- this long and unnecessary dispute over how best to provide flood control in the Arroyo Seco channel and yet maintain the natural environment and last wilderness area in the Pasadena community. Having followed this project since the original Master Plan for Hahamongna in 1999, I believe much of the responsibility lies with the County's refusal to work for safe and workable compromises. Chris Stone is used to heading a "stand alone" agency with little supervision from the Supervisors. Working together with a community like Pasadena which has put sediment experts and other knowledgeable people in a study group to make thoughtful recommendations designed to reduce the excessively large scope of the County's sediment removal program simply does not interest him. We all suffer because of his intransience. Such a waste of time and energy!

Here are my comments on the County's Devil's Gate Sediment Removal Project:

1. THE THREAT TO SAFETY: After almost 25 years of inaction where the County has allowed the sediment to build up without water overflowing the dam, it now maintains urgent action is needed to avoid the possible threat of two 50-year storms. **Based on the historic record, what is the actual probably of even one 50-year storm? What about two? With the retrofitting and strengthening of Devil's Gate Dam over 10 years ago, what amount of rainfall and storm run-off constitutes an actual threat to downstream residents?**

Rather than continue to issue threats of flooding that are not necessarily supported by facts, Pasadena is asking for information that may support its thesis that a less aggressive sediment removal plan will protect the safety of those in the area while preserving the natural environment that is important to residents. **So unless there is clear and factual information to support the County's contention that such drastic sediment removal is necessary, I ask that the County adopt the recommendations of the Pasadena Devil's Gate Dam Sediment Working Group that would remove 1.1 million cubic yards over five years, enough to handle one fifty-year storm.**

2. POLLUTING THE BASIN: Pasadena and its neighboring foothill communities are famous for their bad air created as the LA smog drifts north and is captured by the surrounding San Gabriel Mountains. In other words, these communities already have an air pollution problem. And who is most impacted. Our Youth! Yet the County project which calls for 400 trips-a-day by diesel-powered double dump trucks passes directly by La Canada High School and is adjacent to several other schools. And it does so several months-a-year over a four-to five-year period. **What studies has the County undertaken to look closely at the impact of diesel on the students studying at the schools adjacent to or in close proximity of the sediment removal trucks?** It is my understanding that the City of Los Angeles recently created new methods to study the impacts of air pollution upon residents living adjacent to freeways. **Could the County use these state of the art studies and methods in assessing the impact that its proposed diesel-powered vehicles will have upon La Canada students?**

The Plan and recommendations of the Pasadena Devil's Gate Dam Sediment Working Group have two distinct advantages over the County Sediment Removal Program. First as pertains to air pollution, **under the Pasadena plan fewer trucks will be necessary because less sediment will be removed. Second, removing less sediment will cost less to already stressed taxpayers.**

3. PROTECTING OUR LAST OPEN SPACE (while providing needed flood control): In addition to a rare type of sage, the Hahamongna watershed basin recently was discovered to have a species of bird seldom seen in the southern United States. Facilitating one of the few flowing streams north of Los Angeles, the watershed is home to a very special natural environment that is open and accessible to anyone seeking to walk its trails, hike its hills, listen to its birds or explore its woodlands and streams. As stewards of our vanishing Southern California open space, we must take care of the limited undeveloped land that is still free and open to us. **That's why the recommendations proposed by Pasadena's Devil's Gate Dam Sediment Working Group better serve the needs of a rapidly developing Los Angeles County. The Pasadena plan eliminates far less of the natural habitat surrounding the sediment basin and better protects the stream, wildlife and trails that make this such a unique and special place. Protecting downstream residents is part of the Pasadena Plan but so is protecting a vanishing wilderness area that we call Hahamongna Watershed Park.**

Thank you for responding to my questions and for giving serious consideration to my comments and observation based on years of active involvement with the Arroyo Seco and Hahamongna Watershed Park.

Most sincerely,

Christle Balvin