



Date: April 1, 2008

To: Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Gary DeLong, Councilmember, Third District *GD*
Suja Lowenthal, Councilmember, Second District *SL*
Bonnie Lowenthal, Vice Mayor, First District *BL*

Subject: **Los Angeles River Trash and Pollution**

One of the most critical resources of any beach city is the quality of its beaches and ocean waters. While Long Beach has made significant strides this past year to identify sources of pollution and implement solutions to pollution in Alamitos Bay, the Los Angeles River remains the largest source of trash and pollution that ends up on our beaches and degrades our water quality. Every year the L.A. River deposits an average of 4,500 tons of debris on our beaches, and forces closures of our beaches after heavy rainstorms.

At 51 miles long and a watershed covering over 834 square miles, cleaning up the Los Angeles River is not a project Long Beach can undertake alone. A problem of this magnitude will require federal, state, and regional cooperation as well as significant financial resources.

In April 2008, Congress will begin consideration of the Water Resources Development Act, a federal bill that authorizes national water resources projects. This bill presents an opportunity for Long Beach to begin the process of soliciting federal assistance to the trash and pollution problems in the Los Angeles River, and is the first step towards receiving federal funding for the US Army Corps of Engineers' participation in studying and ultimately implementing solutions to trash, metal, chemical and bacteria pollution. In order to qualify for federal funding, projects must have a nexus to the main missions of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. One of the Army Corps' primary functions is ecosystem and environmental restoration. Large amounts of pollution coming from the LA River, including fertilizers, sewage and other nutrients, cause damage to our aquatic ecosystem and deplete sea life, in addition to the increased risk of human illness. Further, trash and sediment that flows downriver affects the federal navigation channel, which is another main mission of the Army Corps.

It is my hope that we can begin to engage the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to become a partner to study, develop and ultimately implement solutions to clean up the trash that impacts our beaches and address pollution that degrades our water quality.

Recommended Action: **Direct the Federal Legislation Committee and the City Manager to identify federal resources to study and implement solutions to reduce trash debris and pollution associated with the Los Angeles River, including the possibility of including the Los Angeles River as a project in the Water Resources Development Act.**