

May 22, 2017

re: North Atwater Bridge, Council File 11-1246-S1

Dear Members of the City Council,

On behalf of Friends of the Los Angeles River, I write to you today in support of the North Atwater Bridge for its iconic design and as a model for garnering private investment in River improvements. For 30 years, Friends of the Los Angeles River has advocated for improved and expanded public access to and in a restored River, as well as the investment and cross-agency support it will take to make that happen. The North Atwater Bridge is a timely step towards a future River that is accessible and vibrant.

While concerns around cost and design have warranted past discussion and exploration, we believe the precedent-setting benefits the bridge offers outweighs them. The River deserves creative design and will need private investment to accomplish the level of restoration we are all pushing towards. To let this opportunity pass would hamper us all – NGOs and City government alike – from creating the innovative partnerships upon which the River's future relies.

As you move this project towards completion, please consider the need for improved conditions in and connectivity to the tunnel under Interstate 5, which will maximize the potential of connectivity and accessibility the bridge will offer. Furthermore, we have also supported a bridge in the City of Glendale, proposed at a site not far from the North Atwater Bridge. We encourage the City of Los Angeles to coordinate with the City of Glendale to be sure these two bridges ultimately support and complement one another.

Finally, this project and the process for it was a meaningful case study for partnership, funding, and community engagement on the River. Longstanding community members and community-based organizations like ourselves and so many others offer an important perspective in River restoration. As progress on the River advances at a quickening pace, consistent and thorough community engagement will be even more important. We encourage continued public involvement in this project as it moves forward and in future River revitalization projects to come.

With that, we thank the City for its leadership in River revitalization and offer our congratulations on this provocative new bridge. We look forward to a more connected and accessible Los Angeles River for all.

Sincerely,



Marissa Christiansen
Executive Director