

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Katherine Pease  
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**Council File No:** 20-0482  
**Comments for Public Posting:** Please see the attached comment letter from Heal the Bay.



Heal the Bay

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May 12, 2020

Mayor Eric Garcetti  
Los Angeles City Council  
200 N Spring St, Los Angeles, CA 90012

**RE: Support Council File #20-0482 (Koretz, Essential Services) and Comment on the Annual Budget Council File #20-0600 (Krekorian, Budget Proposal)**

Dear Mayor Garcetti, Los Angeles Council President Martinez, and City Council Members:

On behalf of Heal the Bay, we offer our strong support for Councilmember Koretz's motion (#20-0482) as well as request for the protection of funding for the Office of Climate Emergency Mobilization in the proposed budget (#20-0600). Heal the Bay is an environmental organization with over 30 years of experience and 15,000 members dedicated to making the coastal waters and watersheds of greater Los Angeles safe, healthy, and clean. Heal the Bay values and appreciates the collaborative working relationship with the City of Los Angeles in efforts to protect and improve aquatic environments and public health. The City of Los Angeles has been a leader on environmental issues locally, statewide, and even nationally; we ask that this leadership and commitment to the environment continue even in the current COVID-19 pandemic.

We understand that these unprecedented times call for exceptional actions and we are all being forced to make tough decisions. However, now is not the time to sacrifice a commitment to environmental actions and sustainability, particularly related to climate change. The climate crisis is also a public health crisis that will affect us all and impact our most vulnerable communities the hardest. We must continue to address these pressing environmental issues to protect the health of our Los Angeles communities. We are happy to see that the budget for LA Bureau of Sanitation and the Environment (LASAN) remains intact and well supported. Continuation of LASAN's programs displays a commitment to watershed protection, stormwater pollution prevention, and water recycling, all of which are greatly supported and appreciated by Heal the Bay.

However, we were discouraged to learn that the following items have been cut from the proposed budget (#20-0600): funding for the Climate Emergency Mobilization Office (CEMO - \$500,000), the Climate Emergency Commission (CEC - \$200,000), and Climate Change Emergency Projects (\$300,000). **We urge the City Council to restore funding for the Climate Emergency Mobilization Office, the Climate Emergency Commission, and Climate Change Emergency Projects.**

In 2019, Mayor Garcetti launched LA's Green New Deal Sustainability pLAn, recognizing that "[o]ur battle against climate change is a moral imperative, an environmental emergency, and an economic opportunity." Anthropogenic activities have caused the Earth's natural processes to veer off track, resulting in longer droughts, more intense storms, sea level rise, air pollution, hotter temperatures, devastating fire seasons, and more. Underserved communities endure the worst of



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these negative impacts,<sup>1</sup> which are now linked to higher COVID-19 death rates.<sup>2</sup> We understand that although resources are limited, for many communities, the decision to take climate action now can mean the difference between life and death. A dedication to climate change resiliency and action is now more important than ever to protect public and environmental health and we hope that Los Angeles can continue to be a leader in this realm. **We support Councilmember Koretz's motion (#20-0482) to classify all efforts to reduce greenhouse gas and toxic emissions as essential emergency City services.**

We cannot use the pandemic as a reason to turn away from our collective dedication to protecting the environment, which has clear and direct links to the protection of public health. Drastically reducing the City's work on climate change action programs further endangers public health. The climate emergency is happening now and will only continue to worsen. Investing in climate action now will help set the stage for a recovery from COVID-19 that is focused on the green economy and includes a just transition towards clean energy.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. Please feel free to contact us with any questions ([kpease@healthebay.org](mailto:kpease@healthebay.org) or 213-631-8495).

Sincerely,

Katherine Pease, Ph.D.  
Director of Science & Policy

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<sup>1</sup> <https://oehha.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=8dad35dcd2274285874e60871c404edc>

<sup>2</sup> <https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/covid-pm>