

Communication from Public

Name: Lisa Fimiani

Date Submitted: 11/23/2022 11:20 AM

Council File No: 22-1326

Comments for Public Posting: Please see our comment letter about the situation at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh. Thank you! Lisa



Center for Urban Resilience
Academic Affairs

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November 23, 2022

Honorable LA City Councilmembers

Re: Ballona Wetlands Housing Intervention Motion (CF 22-1326)

Our Center for Urban Resilience (CUREs) at Loyola Marymount University (LMU) has brought students to the Ballona Freshwater Marsh for as long as we have been in existence. The Marsh, being so close to the LMU Westchester Campus, has provided opportunities for students to walk and run along the public trail as a form of exercise, and to study birds, plants, insects, mammals, and water quality, as part of their studies and interests at LMU. As a cross-disciplinary opportunity to "Experience Ballona!" at the trailhead of the Ballona Wetlands, through Ballona Discovery Park's formal and informal curriculum provided by LMU and Friends of Ballona Wetlands, the Marsh completes an educational field trip loop, providing students of all ages with an extraordinary experience in nature unlike any other in the Ballona Watershed. The Marsh has also inspired the creation of unique live dance and music events performed by LMU professionals and students in 2006 and 2011: Groundswell: Dance and Music at the Ballona Freshwater Marsh ([Groundswell Trailer](#)).

However, with the encampments of unhoused people parked and living in their cars, trucks, vans, buses, tents, and RV's, on Jefferson Boulevard adjacent to the Marsh, the area has become unsafe and undesirable to access. This situation has been going on now for the past three years, a year before the COVID-19 pandemic began. Once COVID-19 restrictions were lifted, allowing students to experience field trips and conduct research projects again last year, the Freshwater Marsh was deemed off limits because of safety concerns. During our staff's regular visits, conducting monthly avian surveys in partnership with Friends of Ballona Wetlands, we have seen the walking path impeded by unchecked garbage piling up, been exposed to dangerous activities, including gun and knife violence and drug use, and walked around human waste and hazardous materials. The conditions are no longer sanitary or safe for the unhoused people squatting there and potential visitors to the public recreational trails, who also cannot find parking on Jefferson due to the number of stationary vehicles. This especially impacts the disabled and families with small children, who cannot conveniently walk from farther away parking opportunities. Then there are the many species of plants that have been destroyed and the animals that try to find refuge in this ecologically important and sensitive area. Those of us at LMU who have traditionally used the Marsh for educational programming - specifically targeting underserved and disadvantaged K-12 schools, as well as continuing educational and research opportunities for university students, faculty, and staff at LMU, have also been stymied by this situation.

Please find these people acceptable housing somewhere else.

CUREs is a bridge-builder among stakeholders supporting positive urban ecology interventions in Los Angeles and beyond through courses, research, community science and public outreach. The current condition of the Ballona Freshwater Marsh does everyone involved a disservice and must be remedied. Our Center provides a suite of research, education, and restorative justice services in support of our mission to: "empower communities to build resilient, vibrant, and just cities through meaningful interactions with their diverse ecosystems and each other." Please let us know what we can do to help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric G. Strauss". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Eric G. Strauss, PhD
President's Professor of Biology
Executive Director, LMU Center for Urban Resilience

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 11/23/2022 08:50 PM

Council File No: 22-1326

Comments for Public Posting: I oppose any motion by Mr Bonin. He has done enough damage in CD11. Don't let him do more.

Communication from Public

Name: Kathie Mertens
Date Submitted: 11/23/2022 09:09 PM
Council File No: 22-1326
Comments for Public Posting: Please do not allow any no bid cobtracts to be issued for St. Joseph Center and LAHSA. There is not a sufficient plan and a new council person who should have the opportunity to handle this problem.