



BOARD LETTER APPROVAL

ANSELMO G. COLLINS
Senior Assistant General Manager
Water System

JANISSE QUIÑONES
Chief Executive Officer and Chief Engineer

DATE: January 12, 2026

SUBJECT: Acceptance of Two Easement Deeds with a Long-Term Mutual Indemnification from U.S. Borax Inc.

SUMMARY

The Water System requests the acceptance of two Easement Deeds (Easements) with long-term mutual indemnification from U.S. Borax Inc. (Borax). The Easements give the City of Los Angeles (City) rights to construct, operate, maintain, repair, replace, and reconstruct roads over and across certain real property owned by Borax, located at Owens Lake, County of Inyo, State of California. The Easements will provide the City with rights to relocate an existing access road impacted by the State of California Department of Transportation’s (State) Olancha-Cartago Four-Lane Project (Project).

City Council approval is required according to Charter Section 373 and Los Angeles Administrative Code (L.A.A.C.) Section 10.5.

The Easements conveying certain real property interests to the City have no expiration or termination date.

RECOMMENDATION

It is requested that the Board of Water and Power Commissioners adopt the attached Resolution approving and recommending City Council’s approval of the Easements as required in Charter Section 373 and L.A.A.C. Section 10.5.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

- Not relocate the existing access road; however, the State determined that its Project as well as public traffic safety require relocation of the existing access point and road.
- Not accept the Easements with long-term mutual indemnification; however, because of the shared use of the road by Borax and LADWP, a mutual indemnification is acceptable.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

There is no cost to the City or LADWP to acquire the Easements. The State will purchase the Easements on the City's behalf to mitigate impacts associated with its Project.

BACKGROUND

The Project consists of widening parts of U.S. Highway 395 (Highway) from two lanes to four lanes and converting it from a conventional highway to an expressway. Conversion to an expressway requires minimum sight distances for traffic, thus creating a safety issue with LADWP's existing access roads coming off the Highway and leading to Owens Lake. As a result, the State notified LADWP that it would be closing its access road and relocating it farther to the north.

Relocation of LADWP's access road to Owens Lake was anticipated in December 2020, when the State and LADWP entered into a right-of-way contract resulting in the City granting two highway easements to the State for its Project. One of the contract conditions requires the State to enter into future agreements with LADWP to protect the property rights of the City and LADWP affected by the State's Project. The Easements stem from what was anticipated as a possible Project impact to LADWP, requiring a future agreement to relocate LADWP's access and road rights. Towards that goal, the State and LADWP negotiated with Borax for the State to acquire the Easements on the City's behalf to relocate its access road to Owens Lake.

The State will pay the cost to acquire the Easements from Borax. The Easements include a mutual indemnification for liability arising from LADWP's use of the property that exceeds the authority established by Resolution No. 95 207 and, therefore, requires Board and City Council approval.

The attached map provides an aerial image of the existing access road and new Easements.

In accordance with the Mayor's Executive Directive No. 4, the City Administrative Officer's Report was approved on December 29, 2025.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

Determine item is exempt pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15060(c)(2). In accordance with this section, an activity is not subject to CEQA if it will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. Accepting the two easement deeds with a mutual indemnification clause will not result in any physical change in the environment, therefore, this activity is not subject to CEQA.

CITY ATTORNEY

The Office of the City Attorney reviewed and approved the Resolution and Easements as to form and legality.

ATTACHMENTS

- Resolution
- Map
- Easement Deed – Parcel 4027-2
- Easement Deed – Parcel 4028 -6
- CAO Report