

BIODIVERSITY, ACCESS TO NATURE, AND NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS MOTION

WHEREAS, two major global scientific bodies, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), have identified that the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss increasingly threaten nature, human lives, livelihoods and well-being around the world, and neither will be successfully resolved unless both are tackled together. The IPBES assessment clearly demonstrates that the loss of biodiversity is not only an environmental issue, but an economic, development, social, security, moral and ethical issue; and

WHEREAS, in response to a continuously changing climate that threatens the public health and safety of all Angelenos, the City of Los Angeles has adopted a number of aggressive goals both to reduce the City's emission of climate-warming greenhouse gasses and to make our communities more resilient. Among these goals is for the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) to provide 100% clean energy and to source 70% of its water from local sources by 2035; and

WHEREAS, to support healthy ecosystems and watersheds for Los Angeles and the State of California, the implementation of these goals must integrate biodiversity and nature-based solutions; and

WHEREAS, the State of California, in Executive Order N-82-20, has called for accelerated use of nature-based solutions that deliver on our climate change goals and other critical priorities, such as improving public health and safety, securing our food and water supplies, and increasing equity, and

WHEREAS, planting native plants and trees provide many co-benefits including reducing heat island effects and helping the region respond to extreme heat due to climate change LADWP has a long-standing institutional practice of sponsoring and facilitating shade tree planting in partnership with City Plants and with support from other agencies, because shade trees help offset the use of air conditioning and cooling appliances in customer homes, relieving strain on the electrical grid, improving energy efficiency, and reducing the need to generate electricity. Recent calculations show over 5,000,000 kWh of direct energy savings are achieved annually through shading by trees that the LADWP provided to residents and businesses in Los Angeles and these trees helped to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by over 4,000 metric tons annually; and

WHEREAS, researchers have found that access to nature and green space impact wellness, blood pressure, cognitive function, and even life expectancy, and that there are significant inequities in how parks and green space are distributed in Los Angeles. In order to help address these inequities, LADWP is focusing tree plantings in high need zones defined by the Urban Forest Equity Collective (UFEC); and

WHEREAS, the fundamental policies outlined in the LADWP Administrative Manual include the Conservation of Natural Resources: "We practice and promote conservation of the natural resources placed in our hands." and

WHEREAS, there are still significant gaps in biodiversity across corporate and public sector sustainability reporting and management and the utility sector is helping to close this gap and has a critical role in addressing biodiversity and conservation. At the time of this motion, the

electric, multi, and water utilities are the leading industries globally in biodiversity commitments with an increasing number of utilities developing plans and policies, and LADWP is well positioned to lead in this area. LADWP has a strong foundation of habitat and watershed management to build upon as stewards of 490 square miles of land in the Eastern Sierra, where LADWP applies best management practices to protect water quality, habitat, biodiversity and endangered and threatened species throughout the Owens Valley, Long Valley, and Mono Basin watersheds, with over 100 environmental initiatives in Inyo and Mono Counties related to protecting and sustaining the environment, and existing partnerships such as the EPRI Power-In-Pollinators Initiative; and

WHEREAS, consistent with the priorities of the Los Angeles City Biodiversity Program, LADWP aims to protect, enhance, and restore ecosystems and reverse biodiversity loss for climate stability and public health; and has begun setting and reporting goals and actions in biodiversity as part of the City Biodiversity Program; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Water and Power Commissioners of the City of Los Angeles (Board) directs the General Manager and Chief Engineer, or his designees, to drive for industry leadership and institutionalize and integrate biodiversity, habitat enhancement, and nature-based solutions throughout LADWP operations and management of assets, while balancing operational considerations and ratepayer impacts. Specifically, LADWP shall apply a science-based approach, collect data and information on local biological diversity through site assessments and baseline studies that are aligned with the Los Angeles City Biodiversity Index, develop indicators and metrics to track biodiversity impacts and risk management performance, and develop a Biodiversity and Nature-Based Solutions Action Plan, including budget, updated annually, addressing any considerations and competing demands as part of strategic planning; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that LADWP shall continue to comply with all applicable laws and regulations, including impacts to at-risk species, and will strive with the objective of continuously improving practices in habitat management, and striving for leadership in biodiversity and nature-based solutions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that LADWP shall engage the Los Angeles City Biodiversity Expert Council and Interdepartmental Team, educational and research institutions, and government agencies to explore researching, assessing and improving ecological function on LADWP-owned lands, and to develop biodiversity-promoting policies and practices in LADWP operations such as restoration, pre-construction nesting bird surveys, wildlife-certified tree trimming, utilizing California-native plants in LADWP landscape and installations, Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) along transmission rights-of-way, carbon sequestration opportunities, avian protections on power infrastructure, aquatic life protections on water infrastructure, nature-based stormwater capture and water treatment, enhancing soil permeability, habitat supportive brush clearance, and reducing fencing that impedes wildlife movement and connectivity while ensuring security requirements; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that LADWP shall integrate biodiversity, access to nature, and nature-based solutions into capital and infrastructure planning, strategic plans, wildfire prevention planning and other key department plans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that LADWP shall engage with Native American Tribes (Tribes) who have historically inhabited and are the original caretakers of the land under LADWP

stewardship, to apply indigenous knowledge in land management, and consider collaborative models for natural areas such as the Chatsworth Nature Preserve and natural and watershed areas in the Owens Valley; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, to enhance equity and access to nature for all Los Angeles residents, LADWP shall develop plans to enhance habitat and decrease heat island effects on LADWP rights-of-way, properties, and other areas where biodiversity may be promoted within the urban Los Angeles region, especially in Cal-EPA Disadvantaged Communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that LADWP shall build on its best practices in the Eastern Sierra and develop urban biodiversity programs and urban ecology resources for the Los Angeles area to enhance habitat, connectivity and access to nature, and to support the vision of the Los Angeles City Biodiversity Program: that Los Angeles is a City where all Angelenos value biodiversity, honor and respect nature, and steward the natural world, ensuring that ecosystems are protected, enhanced, and restored, environmental and public health benefits are maximized and equitably shared by all, and that Los Angeles is a resilient, biophilic City for generations to come;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that as LADWP is subject to extensive State and Federal legal requirements and regulatory approvals, actions in furtherance of this motion are subject to adequate resource availability, and must comply all applicable laws and regulations, and LADWP's obligations under the Los Angeles City Charter; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Manager and Chief Engineer or their designees will report on the progress of these initiatives to the Board through Board meetings and committee meetings as applicable quarterly.

I HEREBY CERTIFY the foregoing is a full, true, and correct copy of the Resolution adopted by the Board of Water and Power Commissioners of the City of Los Angeles at its meeting held

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY
HYDEE FELDSTEIN SOTO, CITY ATTORNEY

March 22, 2024



BY _____

MORGAN L. HECTOR
DEPUTY CITY ATTORNEY