

SB 355 (Lara)

SB 355 (by Senator Lara—representing Los Angeles) would replace one (of two) members of the Orange County Division of the League of California Cities with a resident from a city that borders the Lower Los Angeles River on the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC), which was created through Statute in 1999. (Please see attached the SB 355 Fact sheet that I requested from the author of the bill that explains why he sees a need for SB 355—The fact sheet states that is for funding projects closer to the Lower Los Angeles River)

The recently approved state water bond provides millions of dollars in funding opportunities for the revitalization of the Lower Los Angeles River watershed, including parks and open space along the river. Many of those funds, including a \$30 million direct allocation for watershed improvements, and a share of \$100 million for urban creek restoration, will be allocated through the RMC.

The RMC is of importance to Orange County. In fact, its territory includes the watersheds for portions of the lower Santa Ana River. (Please see the attached map and picture of the area included in the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy)

OCWD would benefit at keeping representation in the lower Santa Ana River for future funding for watershed improvements along the lower Santa Ana River and possibly projects related to Prado Dam. Ensuring broad representation on the RMC is effective in developing the programs and procuring the funds, through Proposition 1 or other vehicles, to achieve regional environmental objectives.

Also, the Association of California Cities-Orange County has sent a letter to Senator Lara in opposition to SB 355, which is also attached.

Please see attached a DRAFT letter in opposition to SB 355 for your review “SB 355 Senator Lara Oppose letter-DRAFT.”

The bill is moving, and has passed the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Water Committee and is now referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee.