



**SIERRA
CLUB**

Airport Marina Group

Resolution to Protect and Preserve the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve

Whereas, the California 2010 Code of Regulations reiterates State’s policy “to protect threatened or endangered plants, wildlife... or specialized habitat types... for the future use of mankind through the establishment of ecological reserves;” and

Whereas, California spent \$140M of public funds in 2004 to acquire 607 acres of rare, biodiverse, freshwater wetlands and associated habitats; placed them under the State’s protection by establishing the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve (BWER); and appropriated an additional \$25M of public funds to be used within three years for planning (\$2M) and restoration (\$23M); and

Whereas, the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve is a natural gem, that provides rare habitats for migrating birds; a safe haven for a diversity of year-round inhabitants including rare and endangered bird and animal species; abundant flora; a food source for pollinators reliant upon seasonal wetlands diversity, rare grassland and upland habitat; and soil/subsoil carbon sequestering microbiomes; and

Whereas, the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve and the State Lands Public Trust Freshwater Marsh are the last vestiges of over two thousand acres of rare, historic, seasonal freshwater wetlands; BWER needs rehabilitation from past challenges to its ecosystems integrity that included agriculture; dredging out of the Ballona Flood Control Channel and Marina del Rey (a saltwater habitat); commercial/residential development including Playa Vista; ongoing oil/gas exploitation; and

Whereas, seventy-eight years of underground gas storage in BWER have given rise to migrating/escaping toxic gases contaminating the environment; threatening public and ecological health and safety; requiring remediation and monitoring by private fossil fuel interests and commercial/residential development, and monitoring by the city of Los Angeles and the State; and

Whereas, systematic corporate groundwater pumping-out policies have dewatered the BWER since its creation, violating the Coastal Act; freshwater continues to be diverted from Ballona, while the California Constitution mandates that groundwater be managed sustainably for environmental benefit (SB-1168, Pavley. Groundwater management); and

Whereas, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s (CDFW) Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) would violate precautionary “DO NO HARM” fundamental principles of conservation, by:

1. Removing Ballona Channel levees that protect the wetlands;
2. Exposing Ballona to rising seas, higher tides, contaminated/toxic superstorm runoff;
3. Flooding approximately 65%, or 400 acres, of the Ecological Reserve with millions of gallons of increasingly acidified seawater;
4. Contaminating underlying freshwater aquifers with saltwater intrusion;
5. Excavating five million tons of soil with its habitat and seed bank;
6. Destroying abundant flora and fauna;
7. Removing approximately 20% of current wildlife habitat by blanketing 120 acres of habitat with 5 miles of 25-30-foot-high/200-foot-wide levees; US Army Corps of Engineers levee regulations disallow deep-root system growth and employ Vector Control to prevent burrowing animals, prohibiting levees from being used as habitat;
8. Obstructing wetland views, including in the Coastal zone; and

Whereas, the CDFW's FEIR would violate sacred sites of the Tongva indigenous people who lived in Ballona for 10,000 years; causing the destruction of ancient settlements and gravesites, thereby violating principles of human rights and environmental justice; and

Now, therefore, be it resolved that _____ supports:

1. Protecting the Ballona Wetlands Ecological Reserve as a community-engaged restoration that honors "DO NO HARM" restoration principles preserving the land, water, and species dependent on this threatened ecosystem where birds and other wildlife require every acre in order to survive;
2. Protection from fossil fuel interests who threaten Ballona's environment and the public's health, safety, and well-being;
3. Returning Ballona's freshwater to the BWER, opposing further drainage, diversion, and throw-away of its life-giving freshwaters;
4. Opposing the industrial scale bulldozing, demolition, and conversion of Ballona Wetlands into a full saltwater tidal bay;
5. Standing in alliance with environmental justice principles and policies that protect the sacred sites of indigenous peoples, such as the sites of the Tongva within the Ballona Ecological Reserve.

ORGANIZATION _____ DATE _____

Submitted by,

Sierra Club Airport Marina Group
Grassroots Coalition