CITY OF LONG BEACH

KRISTINA DISTRICT 3 DUGGAN
LONG BEACH | COUNCILMEMBER

CINDY ALLEN
COUNCILWOMAN

TUNUA Thrash-Ntuk
LONG BEACH 8TH DISTRICT CITY COUNCILWOMAN

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REVISED

Date: July 21, 2026

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council

From: Councilmember Kristina Duggan
Councilmember Cindy Allen
Councilmember Tunua Thrash-Ntuk

Subject: Support for Cleanup and Abatement Order for Lineage Warehouse Fire Runoff and Improved Regional Notification Protocols

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RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation to request the City Manager, in coordination with the City Attorney, Health and Human Services Department, Public Works Department, and any other appropriate City department, within 30 days, to:

- Draft a letter expressing the City of Long Beach's support for the City of Los Angeles' request for the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board to issue a Cleanup and Abatement Order related to toxic runoff from the Lineage Warehouse fire in Boyle Heights; and,

- Formally request that any Cleanup and Abatement Order, remediation plan, environmental monitoring program, or related regulatory action include downstream impacts to Long Beach, including the Los Angeles River Estuary, Long Beach coastal waters, and the Dominguez Gap Wetlands.

Recommendation to request the City Manager, within 30 days, to send a letter to California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Environmental Protection Agency, the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles County, the City of Los Angeles, and any other appropriate agencies requesting improved and standardized notification and coordination protocols for fire runoff, industrial runoff, hazardous materials releases, chemical spills, and any other incidents where pollutants or potentially hazardous materials enter storm drains, channels, rivers, wetlands, estuaries, bays, or coastal waters.

Recommendation to request that the City Manager provide an update to the City Council within 90 days on agency responses and any available after-action reports, findings, or related information.

DISCUSSION

Long Beach as Southeast Los Angeles' Beachfront

Long Beach maintains its coastline for residents and the broader public, serving as the most accessible beachfront for many families in Southeast Los Angeles. As one of few urban beachfronts in the State, it allows many people, especially from disadvantaged communities, to reach the water by walking, biking, transit, or a short drive. This access only matters if the shoreline is safe and clean for public use.

When water quality is in doubt, families avoid the water, people stop fishing, visitors stay away, and local businesses suffer. Even perceived risks can limit shoreline use. Protecting our water quality is a regional equity issue, as downstream pollution threatens access to one of the most accessible coastal resources for Southeast Los Angeles communities.

Recent Incidents Show a Broader Regional Pattern

Recent incidents across Southern California show that the impacts of major fires, hazardous materials emergencies, and industrial incidents are not limited to the site where they occur. These incidents can place significant strain on fire departments and emergency responders, while also creating downstream water quality concerns when runoff or pollutants enter storm drains and waterways.

The Palisades Fire demonstrated how fire runoff can significantly affect coastal water quality, carrying ash, heavy metals, chemicals, and debris into waterways while raising questions about toxic algal blooms, impacts on marine wildlife, and overall ocean health. The chemical emergency at GKN Aerospace in Garden Grove showed how industrial incidents can raise concerns about runoff, containment, storm drains, public notice, and interagency coordination. While it did not directly impact Long Beach, it highlighted the need for standardized regional protocols.

Finally, the Lineage Warehouse fire in Boyle Heights is directly relevant. Runoff entered storm drains and the Los Angeles River system, which flows to Long Beach.

Lineage Warehouse Fire in Boyle Heights and Potential Downstream Impacts

The Lineage Warehouse fire in Boyle Heights caused immediate and severe harm to the surrounding community. Nearby residents and businesses continue to bear its impacts, which must be acknowledged and addressed. We also know the effects of this fire did not stop at the City of Los Angeles boundary.

The fire at a large cold storage facility produced substantial runoff and debris, including particles from solar panels, refrigeration insulation, and spoiled food. While significant efforts were made to divert runoff and implement BMPs, millions of gallons of potentially contaminated water still flowed into storm drains, channels, and the Los Angeles River system that ultimately ends up in Long Beach.

From Heal the Bay, we understand that tests for Total Coliform, E. coli, and Enterococcus near the site of the fire were all above 24,196 MPN, with a 10:1 dilution. As of July 8, results for testing on other chemicals and toxins have not been provided to the City of Long Beach. Further, reports of dead fish and wildlife in the Los Angeles River and Dominguez Gap Wetlands during the fire raised serious questions about what entered the waterway, how far it traveled, and the extent of its impacts on habitat, aquatic life, and public use.



Dead fish collect in toxic-filled water at the Dominguez Gap Wetlands on Tuesday, June 23, 2026, in Long Beach. (Photo by Howard Freshman, Contributing Photographer)

An Emergency Executive Order issued by Mayor Bass on June 29 directed Los Angeles Sanitation (LASAN) to request that the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board issue a Cleanup and Abatement Order to address any toxic runoff from the fire. Long Beach should support this request and advocate for any Cleanup and Abatement Order, remediation plan, monitoring program, or related regulatory action to include potential downstream impacts to Long Beach, including evaluation of the DeForest Wetlands, Dominguez Gap Wetlands, Los Angeles River Estuary, and Long Beach coastal waters.

If potentially hazardous runoff enters the Los Angeles River and flows toward Long Beach, then Long Beach must be included in the regulatory response.

Timeline of Notification and Water Quality Concerns

The timeline of the Lineage Warehouse Fire in Boyle Heights and downstream water quality concerns demonstrates why improved and standardized notification and coordination protocols are needed.

- **June 17, 2026:** The Lineage Warehouse fire in Boyle Heights started, and a Cal OES notification was issued regarding the fire and firefighting response.

- **June 18 - June 23, 2026:** Long Beach monitoring showed no bacteria exceedances, but routine testing does not identify chemical or toxic contaminants from large industrial fires.

- **June 20:** The City of Los Angeles declared a State of Emergency stating the "presence of a solar array on the roof, hazardous materials and lithium-ion batteries on site, and approximately 85 million pounds of decaying food products contribute to an incident at this facility beyond the mitigation capabilities of traditional firefighting equipment and methods."[1]

- **June 22, 2026:** Dead fish were first reported in the Los Angeles River and the Dominguez Gap Wetlands, prompting a response the following day to begin remediation and testing, including actions to stop the flow of river water into the wetlands.[2]

- **June 24, 2026:** The City of Long Beach issued a water quality advisory due to elevated bacteria levels, raising questions about whether decaying food or fire-related runoff contributed, as no other incident had been identified.

- **June 25, 2026:** Long Beach received its first notification of potential water quality impacts related to the fire from the County, including concerns that low pH levels had been detected.

The concern is that between June 18 and 23, families were boating, jet skiing, and fishing in the Los Angeles River Estuary, as well as swimming in the coastal waters near the river's terminus, without any notice that water quality may have been impacted.

Need for Improved Notification and Coordination Protocols

The County stated that the City of Long Beach was notified on June 25 out of an abundance of caution, as County Public Works had no information indicating that impacts would extend beyond the estuary. By that same date, the City of Long Beach's bacterial testing had already resulted in advisories reaching as far east as the Belmont Veterans Memorial Pier.

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[1] Mayor Bass Issues Declaration of Local Emergency to Mobilize Resources to Fight Warehouse Fire in Boyle Heights | Mayor Karen Bass

[2] https://www.dailynews.com/2026/06/23/boyle-heights-fire-la-county-declares-emergency-possible-la-river-pollutants-investigated/

This shows the need for improved coordination between agencies to better understand the impacts these events could have on water quality and public health.

Current notification practices vary depending on the type of incident, the agency involved, the location, and the pollutant. Regardless of these differences, Long Beach needs timely notification whenever pollutants or hazardous materials may enter waterways so that our Public Health professionals can make informed decisions to best protect the public.

A Tidelands in Transition

Long Beach has long been a working waterfront, balancing many responsibilities at once. It has consistently been a place where public access, economic activity, energy production, and environmental stewardship coexist.

For decades, oil revenue funded key improvements that made the Long Beach waterfront accessible and functional, supporting infrastructure, maintenance, cleanup, public access, and tidelands investments. Now, Long Beach is entering a new era.

Oil production is being phased out, and the revenue that has historically supported tidelands maintenance and improvements is declining. This creates a major question for the City and State: what does the Long Beach coastline look like in a post-petroleum future?

That future has to start with water quality.

Long Beach cannot fully transition to a cleaner, more accessible, and more resilient waterfront if the public does not trust the water. Both actual and perceived water quality matter. Even when our beaches test well during dry weather, pollution events upstream can quickly change public confidence in whether our beaches and bays are safe.

Pollutants regularly move through the Los Angeles River watershed and end up in Long Beach. From 2020 to 2024, Long Beach collected more than 12,500 tons of trash at a reported cost of $12.3 million. Much of that pollution originates outside our city, but the cleanup, the majority of the cost, and the impacts to public confidence fall on our City.

Today, oil revenue helps fund the City’s response to pollution flowing downstream, but this funding is being phased out by the State, leaving Long Beach to absorb a regional burden with fewer resources. That is not sustainable.

As Long Beach plans for a post-petroleum waterfront, the City must be able to protect both the real and perceived quality of its coastal waters. Our beaches, bays, wetlands, and estuary cannot continue to serve as the endpoint for upstream pollution.

Conclusion

Long Beach has always been a working waterfront, and it is also one of the most accessible coastlines for disadvantaged communities across California. Our beaches, bays, wetlands, and estuary deserve the same level of protection and confidence as any other coastline in the

State. Most of the time, Long Beach's coastal waters are pristine, but upstream pollution events can quickly damage both actual water quality and public trust. Stronger accountability measures, along with improved notification, coordination, and remediation when pollution events occur, are necessary to protect water quality in Long Beach and support the City's transition to a post-petroleum waterfront.

This recommendation has been reviewed by Budget Manager Rebecca Bernstorff on July 16, 2026.

FISCAL IMPACT

This recommendation requests City Manager to write various letters advocating for support to address the downstream impacts of the Lineage Warehouse fire on Long Beach waterways. Staff is already coordinating regionally on this issue, and this request is anticipated to have a minimal impact on staffing. There is currently no known job impact to this recommendation.

SUGGESTED ACTION

Approve recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,



Kristina Duggan, Councilmember, Third District



Cindy Allen, Councilmember, Second District



Tunua Thrash-Ntuk, Councilmember, Eighth District