

REVISED MOTION BY SUPERVISORS JANICE HAHN AND
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**Evolving and Advancing the Board Directed Priority: Environmental Justice and
Climate Health**

Over recent years, this Board has taken action to prioritize initiatives that protect the health and safety of communities that live, work, and play in proximity to industrial facilities. Environmental pollution and climate change can compound the overall disease burden in communities already disproportionately impacted by existing health conditions, poor healthcare access, and economic disparities. Environmental disasters and exposure to toxics, such as lead contamination from the Exide Technologies facility, air emissions from neighborhood oil and gas drilling, hexavalent chromium exposure in Paramount and more recently, the Hyperion Water Reclamation Plant and Dominguez Channel incidents, underscore the need to ensure that the County has both the capacity to coordinate complex, multi-agency environmental responses and sustain prevention activities that empower communities, reduce toxic emissions, and ultimately, improve health outcomes.

In 2016, the Board established “Environmental Health Oversight and Monitoring” as a Board Directed Priority and in 2018, the Health Agency identified “Environmental

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Justice” as one of five focus areas for the Center for Health Equity. In Feb 2020, the Board approved the Alliance for Health Integration (AHI) with one of its priority objectives to reduce negative health impacts from environmental health exposures. These efforts have recognized the need to increase the County’s capacity to prevent environmental threats and reduce health disparities in environmental justice communities. In response to the 2016 Board Priority, DPH’s Toxicology and Environmental Assessment Branch (TEA) launched the Community Risk Reduction Initiative, in coordination with LA County Fire Department Health Hazardous Materials Division, the Department of Public Works, and other local, state and federal regulatory agencies to improve environmental conditions in communities close to industrial facilities. The Initiative was successful in raising awareness about shared regulatory responsibilities, a commitment to a “community first” approach, and the consideration of health-protective policy changes in highly burdened communities. However, the Initiative found that communication and coordination among agencies and community stakeholders for prevention-focused activities, unlike emergency responses, is often lacking or insufficient. The lack of a coordinated effort to lead environmental prevention-focused activities limits the County’s ability to proactively monitor harmful pollutants in the environment and take necessary action to improve health outcomes. The County needs to develop a more strategic approach to identifying and addressing environmental problems that communities have been experiencing for decades.

As a result of the 2016 Board Priority, TEA created a unique multi-disciplinary team housed within the Environmental Health Division of DPH. This team consists of a medical toxicologist, program managers, epidemiologists, research analysts, industrial hygienists, public health nurses and climate change specialists; and is currently tasked with

monitoring industry compliance with environmental regulation, engaging with community stakeholders and assessing emerging environmental threats. Additionally, TEA provides technical expertise to many related local initiatives, including the Oil and Gas Strike Team, Regional Planning's Green Zones Program, Assembly Bill 617 Community Air Initiatives and the OurCounty Sustainability Plan. Additionally, TEA authors technical and policy reviews of emerging issues and leads the Climate Health Program that has been tasked with 50 health-related action items in the Sustainability Plan. As the Board continues to prioritize environmental justice, sustainability and climate resiliency, TEA is positioned to effectively lead the County's efforts to develop a coordinated strategic approach to reduce the health impacts of environmental pollution and climate change.

We face serious challenges in Los Angeles County to lower the burden of environmental pollution and climate change on our residents. With the increasing frequency of environmental disasters, which are now exacerbated by climate change, we must take more aggressive action to understand priority environmental problems and chart a clear path forward to protect the health and well-being of those who live near the ports, freeways, industrial facilities, and other sources of pollution.

WE, THEREFORE MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Direct the Chief Executive Office (CEO) to rename and revise the current Board Directed Priority of "Environmental Health Monitoring and Oversight" to "Environmental Justice and Climate Health" to reflect alignment with the Center for Health Equity's focus areas, the Alliance for Health Integration's priorities and the OurCounty Sustainability Plan, while continuing to address disproportionate health impacts of and responses to environmental pollution as established by the 2016 Priority.

2. Instruct the Department of Public Health (DPH), in consultation with the CEO, Fire Health HazMat Division, Department of Public Works, and the Sustainability Office to propose a strategic planning process to operationalize the Environmental Justice and Climate Health Board Directed Priority and report in writing to the Board in 120 days. The report shall include:
 - a. A planning process and timeline to consult with internal and external stakeholders, including but not limited to, local environmental leaders and community-based organizations to develop a long-term, comprehensive Strategic Plan that advances the County's commitment to improving environmental conditions and related health outcomes.
 - b. A roadmap and analysis of how to create an Office of Environmental Justice and Climate Health in DPH and how the new office would coordinate with related County initiatives, including but not limited to, the Center of Health Equity, Climate Resiliency Initiative, Sustainability Office, the Equity in Infrastructure Initiative, and the Office of Oil and Gas. The framework should provide recommendations and clarifications regarding the roles and responsibilities of the various efforts to ensure a cogent, purpose-driven approach that maximizes resources in support of the Board Directed Priority.
 - c. A comprehensive set of policy areas of focus for Board consideration that could be pursued to improve public health outcomes and reduce public health disparities in communities overburdened by pollution exposure and poor air quality.
 - d. Identification of any data surveillance systems, data dashboards or

other data needs to understand current environmental health conditions, monitor progress over time, and communicate information with stakeholders.

- e. In consultation with the Alliance for Health Integration, explore potential opportunities to coordinate with managed care plans or other entities on reimbursing for mitigation strategies to reduce negative outcomes from environmental hazards and climate change (e.g., air filters, upgrades of central heating, ventilation, and/or air conditioning (HVAC) systems, etc.). Such a program should not only begin to protect residents from the significant pollution risks but would also begin to offer at-risk residents a proactive opportunity to improve the infrastructure of their homes as temperatures rise.

- 3. As part of the 120-day report back, instruct DPH, in consultation with the CEO, to identify available existing DPH resources and staffing to support initial efforts and any necessary one-time bridge funding to support consultants to develop and implement the Strategic Plan. Any requests for net County cost will be considered in a future budget phase to allow recommendations to be made within the context of the overall budget and numerous competing funding priorities and requests.

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