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July 23, 2021

Ms. Barbara Romero, Director and General Manager  
Los Angeles Sanitation and Environment  
1149 S. Broadway Street, Suite 900  
Los Angeles, CA 90015-2213

**RE: PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTIVE TO OFFER RELOCATION TO RESIDENT IMPACTED BY ODORS DUE FROM THE HYPERION WATER RECLAMATION PLANT**

Dear Ms. Romero:

On July 12, 2021, approximately 17 million gallons of unfiltered sewage was discharged into the ocean from the Hyperion Water Reclamation Plant (“Hyperion”) through pipes which extend one mile and five miles offshore. The spill affected multiple beach areas and an on-site containment basin.

The County Department of Public Health (“Public Health”) understands that the Hyperion facility became inundated with overwhelming quantities of debris, causing backup of the headworks facilities. This caused nearly catastrophic flooding of Hyperion, which resulted in significant areas of the plant being submerged under water and major damage to equipment and processes that treat and clean wastewater.

Public Health understands that the City of Los Angeles is currently working around the clock to pump wastewater out of inundated facilities, sanitize facilities and equipment, and mitigate hazardous conditions inside the facilities caused by the flooding. Public Health understands that the process to repair damaged facilities and equipment to restore full functionality to Hyperion will take at least 30 days or more.

On July 20, 2021, Public Health was notified of multiple odor complaints from nearby resident. Public Health teams visited Hyperion that afternoon and assessed both the upwind and downwind conditions.

It was reported to Public Health staff that odors are emanating from buildings that do not have odor control equipment, but which were inundated by the sewage discharge. Public Health also understands that the sewage operation itself may not be functioning optimally, and the operation itself may be a contributory source of odors. Resident complaints and reports of noxious odors were confirmed by Public Health prominently in the downwind area. Further, residents reported physical symptoms resulting from the odors to Public Health teams.

Fortunately, air monitoring readings taken the afternoon of July 20, did not detect Hydrogen Sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S), and there is not a present and substantial hazard to life and health. However, these odors are causing consistent, real symptoms in residents. Further, residents without central air systems are closing their windows to keep out odors, which can result in poor indoor air quality, rise in indoor temperatures, and additional adverse health outcomes. These odors are sufficiently pervasive to be considered a public nuisance to residents and those working and recreating nearby.

Public Health understands that the Hyperion is directing those persons who believe that they have lost money or property because of the July 11 incident file a claim with the City of Los Angeles.

Given the situations and that substantial odors are likely to continue until the Hyperion is repaired, Public Health is recommending that the Hyperion specifically communicate to nearby residents that reasonable expenses incurred for obtaining temporary relocation while the odors persist will be considered as a reimbursable loss by the City of Los Angeles.

Public Health is confident that the Los Angeles City Sanitation and Environment Bureau will continue to expedite and complete the cleanup of Hyperion, and to protect the health of those persons living, working and recreating near the Hyperion. Public Health, pursuant to Los Angeles County Code section 11.02.190, directs the Bureau, while substantial odors persist in and around the Hyperion, to:

1. Monitor outdoor air impacts to the public in areas near the Hyperion and prioritize areas within the Hyperion with the highest odor contribution for cleanup and abatement.
2. Publicize the residents that reasonable temporary relocation expenses of residents to avoid negative health impacts from the July 11 incident will be considered as a potential reimbursable expense by the City of Los Angeles.
3. Provide to Public Health by July 28, 2021, a description of necessary actions to be taken by the Bureau to quickly abate the odor nuisance, and assistance provided to persons negatively impacted by the July 11 incident. Please submit a list of both actions taken and proposed actions to Liza Frias, Environmental Health Director at 5050 Commerce Drive, Baldwin Park, CA 91706, or by email at [lfrias@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:lfrias@ph.lacounty.gov).

Residents should be advised to report all odor complaints to the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) at <http://www.aqmd.gov/home/air-quality/complaints>, or by telephone at 1-800-CUT-SMOG (1-800-288-7664).

Sincerely,



Muntu Davis, M.D., M.P.H.  
County Health Officer