

SUPERVISOR LINDSEY P. HORVATH

FIELD NOTES

Date: March 15, 2025

Attendees

- Ashley Oelsen
 - Carolyn Day
 - Lizzie Baum
 - Stephanie Inouye
 - Rachel Fox, Arts and Community Services Deputy, Office of Supervisor Lindsey Horvath
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Meeting Summary

The meeting centered on beach and ocean contamination following recent fires in the Los Angeles area. Rachel Fox, the Arts and Community Services Deputy, introduced her role overseeing beaches, harbors, and other departments within the Supervisor's jurisdiction.

Participants included:

- **Lizzie Conbaum**, a Santa Monica resident and environmental advocate, who helped organize the *March to Save the Sea*.
- **Veronica Velasquez**, founder of the Venice Helping Hub and community organizer.
- **Ashley Oelsen**, Commissioner for Sustainability and a conservation biologist, who shared her expertise and recent experiences related to stormwater impacts and coastal testing.

Rachel discussed the County's recent motion addressing post-fire beach conditions and debris removal. She acknowledged the Department of Public Health's limited testing capacity and reliance on the Regional Water Board. Testing of both sediment and water has been ongoing since January 26, 2025.

Concerns were raised about the lack of transparency in testing data, insufficient public communication on water quality, and weak safety measures. Participants emphasized the need for robust public information systems, especially ahead of rain events, and more consistent storm drain maintenance.

Discussion Highlights

1. Introduction and Role Overview

- Rachel introduced her role overseeing beaches and harbors under Supervisor Horvath's office.
- Participants shared their backgrounds and involvement in environmental advocacy and community organizing.

2. County Motion and Testing Procedures

- Rachel detailed the County's motion and clarified that testing began on January 26.
- She noted the Department of Public Health's testing constraints and reliance on the Regional Water Board for supplemental support.

3. Public Safety and Communication Concerns

- Participants voiced concern over the absence of warning signage and timely updates.
- Emphasis was placed on the importance of proactive, multilingual public communication regarding potential health risks.

4. Storm Drain and Beach Cleanup Issues

- Concerns were raised about inadequate cleanup of debris before major rain events.
- Veronica and Ashley emphasized the need for clear pre-storm protocols and ongoing maintenance of storm drains.

5. Future Actions and Community Involvement

- The group discussed increasing community pressure through coordinated advocacy.
- They agreed to organize a sustained social media and direct contact campaign targeting key public officials.

Action Items

- **Rachel** to share:
 - Initial testing results from the State Water Board
 - Specific testing locations
- **Rachel** to inquire about:
 - Including community representatives in the twice-weekly Water Monitoring Task Force calls
- **Ashley** to:
 - Compile and send follow-up questions regarding testing methods and safety thresholds
 - Develop a comprehensive list of technical questions for county officials
- **Veronica** to:
 - Design social media assets for the upcoming nine-day public engagement campaign
- **All participants** to:
 - Coordinate a nine-day advocacy effort targeting specific agencies and officials