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January 25, 2022

Ann Edwards
CEO, Sacramento County
700 H Street, Room 7650
Sacramento, CA 95

Howard Chan
City Manager, City of Sacramento
915 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

To Ms. Edwards and Mr. Chan,

The American River Parkway Foundation (Foundation) along with members of the Parkway Fire Safe Council and a coalition of concerned local community members and businesses are submitting a list of demands to Sacramento County (County) and the City of Sacramento (City) to address the growing concern of illegal camping on the American River Parkway (Parkway).

The Parkway is in crisis. The environmental and public safety impacts of the growing number of incidents of illegal camping threaten the Parkway's beauty and sustainability and are a hazard to communities, schools and businesses that border the Parkway. This includes growing fire danger, diminished water quality and hazardous materials resulting from intravenous drug use.

The Foundation has not waited for local governments (City and County) to take the lead in tackling these critical issues. Instead, we have increased the number of clean-ups along the Parkway, debuted the *Parkway in Peril* video to highlight the devastation caused by fires from illegal campers and created the Parkway Fire Safe Council to address the removal of vegetation in an effort to reduce fires on the Parkway. But it is the County's responsibility to provide for the health, safety and welfare of residents. This includes ensuring county parks are a safe place for all and that critical infrastructure, including power lines, water wells and rail lines, are protected.

Despite the urgency expressed by the Foundation, we continue to see local governments introduce initiatives but show no forward progress while these problems grow. That is why we are issuing the below list of demands.

1. **A detailed plan by March 2022 to address removal of illegal campers from the Parkway.** This plan must address the entire County and spell out the percentage of funding for the American River Parkway. It must include:
 - Timeline outlining full details and benchmarks of the plan.
 - How the plan will be funded and the total cost dedicated to the American River Parkway.
 - A mechanism to report back to the community every three months, beginning March 2022, on progress of the plan.
 - In 2022, net removal of at least 750 illegal campers from the Parkway.
 - Coordination between the County, City and other necessary agencies to comply with accurate and timely interpretations of legal requirements (including Martin v. Boise).
 - Provide to the public a detailed plan on how this will be accomplished.

2. **Assumption of management of Parkway open space (portions of the Parkway not associated with a regional park) by the Foundation from Sacramento County Regional Parks.** The County will continue to provide funding for the management.

3. **Establishment and distribution of funding to restore the extensive damage done by illegal campers to the Parkway to date.** Funding will address fire burn scars as well as restoration to understory in affected areas and be directed to the American River Parkway Fire Safe Council.
 - As part of the restoration, the County must approve the latest Natural Resources Management Plan. With this adoption, additional funding can be sought.
 - Funding will also be allocated to develop fire mitigation plans.

4. **In the first 6 months of 2022, the County will develop a plan to mitigate the damage done by illegal camping on the Parkway.**

5. **Maintain healthy water for wildlife and humans.** This is essential for the river as a critical water source for wildlife and source for recreation for Sacramento residents.
 - As the County continues to work with the Regional Water Board to develop standards on quarterly water testing, we ask that more locations – especially those in areas heavily impacted by illegal camping – be added to testing plans.
 - For areas that do test heavily for E. coli and other bacteria attributable to human waste, we ask that the County have ready and executable plans to mitigate outbreaks.

6. **Increase and maintain safety in the Parkway so that it is a safe place for all and nearby homes, schools and businesses are protected.**
 - Enforce ordinances and laws that are already in place, including camping and open-flame cooking in designated areas only.
 - Provide training for Rangers so they can identify and help protect natural plant and animal habitats.
 - Protect and allow Parkway stakeholders to take proper measures to protect critical infrastructure along the Parkway, including utility lines, levees, water wells and rail lines.

7. **Timely removal of refuse to reduce fire risk and contamination.** Volunteers remove hundreds of thousands of pounds of trash from the Parkway every year, but this means nothing if the collected refuse sits for days without being collected.

- Ensure trash is removed within 24 hours of a scheduled clean-up. This will require coordination between the County and the organization leading a clean-up.
- Elimination of all propane tanks, butane tanks, generators and cooktops from the Parkway – even if they are currently in use – by June 2022.

The Foundation will continue to lead on finding solutions to address issues impacting the Parkway, but we implore the County and City to take the measures to guarantee the safety of the Parkway and its neighbors. It is Sacramento's urban jewel and serves as a critical resource for the region's infrastructure. It needs to receive the protection it deserves.

Should you have any questions, please contact us at (916) 486-2773.

Sincerely,



Dustin Luton, Board President, American River Parkway Foundation

On behalf of the American River Parkway Foundation Board of Directors and staff, members of the Parkway Fire Safe Council and concerned local community members and businesses

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