

# AB 530 (Rendon)

## Los Angeles River Master Plan Update

### Issue

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The County of Los Angeles adopted a Master Plan for the entire Los Angeles River (the River) in 1996. Since then, the City of Los Angeles has done substantial work on developing a “revitalization plan” for the Upper LA River, within the City’s boundaries. After almost two decades, the time has come to update the Master Plan, focusing more attention and resources on the Lower LA River.

### Background

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Responsibility for managing the Los Angeles River dates back to 1781, when the King of Spain granted the City of Los Angeles a charter that included rights and responsibilities for the River, in and upstream from the then-small pueblo.

Originally, the River ran freely along an alluvial floodplain, which today is the City of Los Angeles. In the 1930’s, destructive flooding led to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers designing and building facilities to minimize the impacts of future floods. The Corps projects included lining most of the River with concrete. In the 1950’s, the River ran dry for 9 months of the year. More recently, however, the City of Los Angeles’ Tillman treatment plant discharges treated water to keep the River wet year-round.

In 1989, LA Mayor Tom Bradley set up the first task force to look at restoring the River, to consider how to manage the River for values other than flood control, including public trust uses like wildlife and parks. In 1996, the County of Los Angeles adopted a “Los Angeles River Master Plan.” A decade later, the City of Los Angeles adopted its own River “Revitalization Master Plan,” focusing on the upper River within the city limits.

In the years that followed, the City advocated for the Corps of Engineers to approve and pay for a substantial restoration project for the Upper LA River within the city limits. The Corps approved “Alternative 20” in 2014.

Also in 2014, California voters approved a water bond that included \$100 million for the River. The bond authorized funding for both the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, which has responsibility for the Upper River, and the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, which has responsibility for the Lower River. The proposed 2015-16 Budget includes \$19.1 million for both conservancies.

### Legislation

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Assembly Bill 530 (Rendon) would authorize the Secretary of Natural Resources, in coordination with the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, to appoint a local working group to develop a “revitalization plan” for the Lower River, just as the Upper River has its plan. This revitalization plan would be consistent with and designed to enhance the County’s Master Plan for the entire river.

The Rivers and Mountains Conservancy would staff the working group, which would be eligible for State funding from the water bond in developing the plan.

As introduced, AB 530 starts a conversation about how to improve the Lower River in concert with the revitalization of the Upper River, so that the entire River watershed could be managed collaboratively. The County of Los Angeles would take the lead in bringing together all those who care about the River and its future, working closely with State agencies that have the resources that can support the River’s restoration effort.

### Contact Information

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