

...the judge's ruling. It's a victory for the residents of Porter Ranch and for fairness, really."

City Councilman Mitch Englander also hailed the ruling.

"Before this community can begin to heal, every resident must be confident that this tragedy is behind them and their family is safe," he said.

No, Not Our Water!

The regional water board is suing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers over dredge and fill operations along the Los Angeles River in Glendale and the Sepulveda Basin that allegedly violated the Clean Water Act.

The lawsuit, lodged in Los Angeles federal court by the Regional Water Quality Control Board, alleges the corps neglected to obtain required water quality certifications in advance of two projects in 2011 and 2012 in the river and its tributaries in Glendale and the Sepulveda Basin.

A corps spokesman did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Charles Stringer, chair of the regional water board, said that in both instances, the corps used heavy equipment to remove vegetation and did little to stop discharges of oil, grease and other pollutants into the river.

"The Los Angeles Regional Water Board has made every effort to work with the Army Corps of Engineers in seeking compliance with the Section 401 requirements of the Clean Water Act and federal regulations," Stringer said.

"Unfortunately, the Army Corps has consistently demonstrated a failure to comply. Their actions have forced the regional board to file suit in federal court to ensure compliance with laws that protect the water quality and environment of the Los Angeles River and its tributaries."

The complaint does not seek to delay any emergency flood control projects designed to ensure public safety in this El Nino year.

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"Instead, the state's water boards have worked with the Army Corps to use existing state water quality certifications to ensure that emergency work can go forward before anticipated heavy rains," Stringer said.

The first alleged violation took place at the Verdugo Wash, a tributary of the river in Glendale, just north of downtown Los Angeles. The area is known as the Glendale Narrows.

The second took place along Haskell Creek, a tributary to the river located in the Sepulveda Basin, a 2,000-acre flood management basin and wildlife reserve located on the upper portion of the river in the San Fernando Valley.

The two projects are alleged to have discharged sediment into the river that could affect water quality and aquatic life and wildlife habitat.

Excessive discharges of sediment can limit sunlight from entering the water and in turn inhibit the growth of aquatic plants and destroy spawning habitats for bottom-dwelling organisms and larval fish, according to the water board.