



# LOS ANGELES WATERKEEPER®

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **“First Flush” Rain Poses Serious Threat to Los Angeles Water Quality**

*Los Angeles Waterkeeper Collects Storm Water Samples at  
Biggest Industrial Polluter Facilities*

October 9, 2013 (Los Angeles, CA) — After nearly 7 months of no rain, today is LA’s “first flush”, which is cause for dangerously high levels of pollution in the Santa Monica and San Pedro Bays. A major threat to human health and marine life, the first rain of the season is also an opportune time for Los Angeles Waterkeeper to collect storm water samples at the most polluted industrial facilities in LA County.

Storm water is the main source of pollution to Santa Monica and San Pedro Bays, endangering aquatic life, public health and negatively impacting our tourist economy. This type of urban runoff carries contaminants such as fecal bacteria, oil, grease, metals, pesticides, litter and other toxic chemicals that have accumulated on the surface over several months of dry weather. Carried through the 5,000 mile-long storm drain system, storm water receives no treatment and flows directly from the streets of LA into the ocean when it rains.

Los Angeles Waterkeeper, the watchdog for inland and coastal water quality protection in LA, relies on the “first flush” rain for storm water samples crucial to its work. LA Waterkeeper’s investigative team is actively looking into more than two dozen industrial facilities throughout LA County that are suspected of violating federal and state clean water laws, and today is the ideal time to collect water samples from those sites. In an effort to stop facilities (waste transfer stations, scrap yards, and waste recyclers) from discharging harmful pollutants that end up in our water, the samples will be tested at state certified labs for heavy metals including iron, aluminum, copper, lead, zinc, mercury, and chromium, trash, and fecal bacteria. Data collected will be submitted to the Regional Water Quality Control Board or other agencies to take action. If necessary, Los Angeles Waterkeeper will proceed with their own litigation, with an end goal of forcing facilities to eliminate their storm water pollution discharges, achieve compliance with water quality standards, and meet the monitoring and reporting requirements aimed to protect public health and the environment in communities in industrial Los Angeles.

“LA Waterkeeper is diligent and effective all year long protecting waterways in Los Angeles County from sources of pollution like urban runoff, sewage spills, industrial wastewater, and trash,” said Liz Crosson, Executive Director for Los Angeles Waterkeeper. “But first flush is an “all-hands on deck” experience. Every year, staff and volunteers are out there measuring the pollution that has accumulated all summer so that we can identify the worst sources of pollution and strategies to clean up LA.”

Although industrial facility pollution is a major contributor to storm water pollution, Los Angeles Waterkeeper reminds Los Angeles residents that they can take steps today to reduce runoff impact

such as fewer pesticides in fertilizers, picking up litter, using reusable items and cleaning up after their pets. They also urge beach goers to use Waterkeeper's Swim Guide website (<http://www.theswimguide.org>) to check water quality at beaches before going in the water, especially after it rains, when the water is the most contaminated. Exposure to runoff can cause a variety of illnesses, most frequently respiratory infection and stomach flu.

For further information, please contact Rachel Stich at (310) 394-6162 x108.

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#### ABOUT LOS ANGELES WATERKEEPER

Founded in 1993, Los Angeles Waterkeeper's mission is to protect and restore Santa Monica Bay, San Pedro Bay, and adjacent waters through enforcement, fieldwork, and community action. It works to achieve this goal through litigation and regulatory programs that ensure water quality protections in waterways throughout L.A. County. Los Angeles Waterkeeper's Litigation & Advocacy, Marine, and Water Quality teams conduct interconnected projects that serve this mission.