

**For Immediate Release**

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**Court grants six-month extension for people to respond to  
Ventura River Watershed lawsuit**

*The City, joined by the City of Ojai and supported by other parties, requested the extension*

At a hearing this afternoon, the Los Angeles Superior Court granted the City of Ventura's and the City of Ojai's requests for a six-month extension for property owners to decide whether or not to file an answer in the Ventura River Watershed lawsuit. The new deadline to respond to the lawsuit and file an answer is September 8, 2020.

Over the course of the next few weeks, the City of Ventura will mail a postcard to everyone who received a Notice or Summons, notifying them of the court's decision. The extension will allow those who received Notices or Summons additional time to decide if they would like to join the lawsuit. The City is optimistic that it will make sufficient progress toward a settlement agreement with the other parties during the next six months.

Stemming from a 2014 lawsuit filed by environmental nonprofit Santa Barbara Channelkeeper against the City of Ventura and the state of California, the City — who reached an interim settlement agreement with Santa Barbara Channelkeeper in 2019 — is in ongoing discussions with the large water users to develop a collaborative, local "physical solution" to protect the Steelhead population and maintain its least expensive and oldest water resource, the Ventura River. If a settlement is reached, the City's cross-complaint, an action taken to initiate the collaborative solution, would not be litigated.

In January of this year, Notices and Summons were sent to 10,472 and 1,701 property owners, respectively, as a result of a court order requiring the noticing in order for the court to recognize any settlement agreement. Property owners who received the Notices or Summons now have an additional six months to decide whether to file an answer to the lawsuit.

The City has developed a website dedicated exclusively to providing information about this topic, which includes a comprehensive FAQ section, a resources page that includes links to the recordings of the public meetings the City has held on this topic, and a news section which will be regularly updated.

To learn more about the proceedings, please visit: <http://www.venturariver.com>

This release is available on the City of Ventura website at: [www.cityofventura.ca.gov](http://www.cityofventura.ca.gov)

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