



URBAN
ARENA



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Emma Howard
Department of Regional Planning
320 West Temple
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Emma,

As the owner and principal of one of the most creative Landscape Architecture offices in Southern California we have serious concerns regarding some of the plant species contained within the proposed SEA Ordinance Draft Design Manual.

The Landscape Profession as a whole is very aware of the destructive nature of invasive plant species as we are considered stewards of the land that helps bridge the gap between of fellow disciplines: Engineering, Architecture and Planning. When it comes to determining invasive plant species we review several publications including the California Invasive Plant Council to make sure what is installed within our projects is not detrimental to the local environment.

One of the hardest concepts I had while reviewing the SEA Ordinance is how entire plant species are labeled as invasive without considering the environment where they would in fact be planted. For example, just because a plant is invasive in the desert does not mean it is invasive near the coast, since the birds that live along the coast eat all the berries that make the plant invasive in the desert [where the plant does not have the natural 'predator' being the bird so the berries/seeds spread and become invasive].

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It is also worth noting that horticulturalists are being ever vigilante in creating hybrid versions of otherwise invasive plants that are in fact not invasive. For example, the SEA Ordinance considers the Olive tree [one of the most popular trees planted in Southern California] to be invasive, however horticulturists have created 'fruitless' varieties which have infertile/no fruits on the tree that could cause the plant to become invasive.

It would helpful to understand the logic and selection process for how certain plants are being considered invasive under the new SEA Ordinance Draft Design Manual because as it stands now, The document would severally cripple the diverse landscape designs that are created within the region, and considering Southern California is one of the most diverse cultures in the United States, if not the World, the document being proposed will create a homogenized landscape aesthetic for an entire region that has prided itself on being diverse from social landscapes to the environmental landscapes.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MS', followed by three dots.

Michael Schrock
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