



TODD SPITZER

SUPERVISOR, THIRD DISTRICT
ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

ORANGE COUNTY HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
333 W. SANTA ANA BLVD., SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA 92701 PHONE
(714) 834-3330 FAX (714) 834-2786
Todd.Spitzer@ocgov.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 12, 2017

CONTACT: Matt Morrison, Director of Communications
Phone: (714)834-5498 Mobile: (678)908-6949
Melanie Eustice, Chief of Staff
Phone: (714) 834-3330 Mobile: (714) 581-7784

Supervisor Todd Spitzer Votes to Increase Law Enforcement Santa Ana Riverbed; Reiterates Commitment to Clear Homeless Encampment and Restore Order

(Orange County, CA) — The continuing effort to develop solutions to the complex problem of homelessness requires immediate resolute action. While the County has continued to work with all stakeholders on a compassionate and humanitarian approach to the multi-layered problem, conditions on the Santa Ana Riverbed have reached intolerable proportions.

“I will not allow the Santa Ana riverbed to become Orange County’s Skid Row,” said Supervisor Todd Spitzer, Third District. “Living conditions there are unsanitary and dangerous. I am proud the Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to increase law enforcement presence on the riverbed. We are not criminalizing homelessness, rather we are protecting public safety.”

Spitzer’s joint directive with Supervisor Andrew Do to the County CEO on June 6th of this year was designed as a progressive step toward addressing the most critical needs. As a flood channel, the riverbed is not suitable for human habitation. Sanitation issues combined with criminal activity has compounded the public safety threat for those inhabiting the riverbed as well as citizens in the community.

The wider solution requires a coordinated effort by the County, cities, local law enforcement, concerned non-profit and charitable organizations, as well as the business community and citizens throughout Orange County. This includes the homeless population itself. Individuals must cooperate in helping themselves.

“The homeless must be treated with compassion and offered access to shelter and services,” Supervisor Spitzer explained. “At the same time, they have a responsibility to accept our outreach because we will ultimately close the riverbed to the homeless.”

“The riverbed trail was designed for public enjoyment. Law enforcement presence will address the criminal element in encampments, with the expectation needy people among the homeless will accept social services and shelter provisions free from intimidation,” Supervisor Spitzer added.

There are deeper complexities that will require longer-term solutions but the immediate need is to safely and humanely remove the riverbed encampment in the interest of public safety.

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