



December 15, 2020

**By E-mail**

Hon. Mike Bonin  
Councilmember, CD-11  
Room 395, City Hall  
200 N. Spring Street  
Los Angeles, California 90012

Alan Como, AICP  
City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning  
221 North Figueroa Street, Suite 1350 Los Angeles, CA 90012  
Via E-Mail: alan.como@lacity.org

**Re: Berggruen Institute Project, Case No. ENV-2019-4565-EIR: Request for Scoping Comment Extension**

Dear Councilmember Bonin and Mr. Como,

I am the Vice-President of Brentwood Hills Homeowners Association (Brentwood Hills). I am writing with respect to the proposed Berggruen Institute on Canyonback Ridge above Mandeville Canyon, and the comment deadline of December 21, 2020. Brentwood Hills strongly supports the many community groups and citizens who have asked for an extension of that deadline for 60 days.

By way of background, Brentwood Hills is a community of about 450 single-family homes along the western ridge of Mandeville Canyon. Brentwood Hills was instrumental along with other key community groups in obtaining the open space and trail easements on Canyonback Ridge that will be directly impacted by the Berggruen development. Our community members regularly use the Westridge Canyonback Wilderness Park for recreation. Brentwood Hills fought hard for the creation of that Park and for the protection of habitat and trails throughout the Santa Monica Mountains. We have a strong interest in protecting the heritage trees, trails, wildlife and sensitive environment in and around the Santa Monica Mountains, including on the two ridges that will be impacted by the proposed Berggruen development. And we, like other residents of Mandeville Canyon and the surrounding ridges, were evacuated in the Getty Fire and are very concerned about fire safety.

The Notice of Preparation was released on November 20, 2020 less than a week before the Thanksgiving holiday. Due to COVID and the holidays, our Board will not be meeting again until January 2021, which does not give our Boardmembers sufficient time to discuss and approve comments on such an extensive and important project, especially one that is requesting an unprecedented specific plan amendment to try to get

around the fact that the zoning and current general and specific plans applicable to the property prohibit Mr. Berggruen's huge private institutional project.

What is the rush on this that would justify such a tight deadline right over the Holidays during a pandemic in which the COVID numbers in Los Angeles are reaching crisis proportions?

Berggruen's project has been in the works for years, and he withdrew his prior proposal due to massive community opposition and numerous legal deficiencies. There is no justification whatsoever in setting a 30-day comment period under these circumstances for such a large, destructive and significant project. A project of this size and scope cannot be adequately reviewed in just 30 days under normal conditions, let alone during a COVID-19 pandemic when in-person meetings are restricted and members of the community are dealing with home-schooling, working from home and many other unusual circumstances due to the pandemic.

We strongly object to the City providing only the minimum allowed comment period for the scoping process during the unprecedented economic, social and public health upheaval resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Public participation is a fundamental part of the fair and transparent process required by the California Environmental Quality Act. Brentwood Hills urges you to grant a 60-day extension of the comment period in order to assure such a fair and transparent process.

Sincerely,



Michael R. Leslie  
Vice President and Board Member,  
Brentwood Hills Homeowners Association

Cc: Brentwood Hills Board of Directors  
Brentwood Residents Coalition  
Hillside Federation