

OMGIVNING

11.10.25

Supervisor Kathryn Barger, Chair
Supervisor Hilda Solis
Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell
Supervisor Lindsay P. Horvath
Supervisor Janice Hahn
500 W. Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Subject: Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration

Dear Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors,

I am writing to you today as an **experienced professional architect** to respectfully urge the Board of Supervisors to pause the current seismic retrofit design scheme as well as discussions regarding the demolition of the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration..

My name is **Karin Liljegren**, and I am the **Principal and Founder of Omgivning**, an architecture firm focused on the **rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of existing and historic buildings** in Los Angeles. I have been a local leader in this specific field for over 25 years and recognized nationally by the **AIA (American Institute of Architects)** for my work. It is from this vantage point of specialized, practical expertise that I offer my perspective.

The Need for Financial Due Diligence

I understand the Board is currently facing a reported total upgrade cost approaching **\$2 billion**, including an estimated **\$700 million for the seismic retrofit** alone. Based on extensive experience with comparable large-scale retrofits, it is my professional opinion that this seismic retrofit estimate **appears to be significantly elevated** and warrants immediate scrutiny.

This high cost is associated with a **base isolation seismic retrofit scheme**, which is recognized as the most expensive technical approach to retrofits and rarely used. My firm's portfolio shows that successful, code-compliant seismic retrofits for complex structures in Los Angeles range from **\$20 to \$150 per square foot**. For instance, one of our current projects, a similar sized LA County adaptive reuse conversion of an arguably more complex non-ductile concrete structure—had its seismic retrofit costed in 2025 at approximately **\$130 per square foot**. The estimated \$700 per square foot figure for the Hall of Administration stands as a significant outlier that requires technical validation against less costly alternatives.

The Irreversible Environmental and Civic Cost

Beyond the compelling economic argument for reinvestment, the demolition of this building would

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represent a significant, irreversible cost to our community and environment. Tossing nearly **one million square feet of concrete and steel into a landfill** would be a massive expenditure of **embodied carbon** and material—a stark contradiction to modern sustainability goals. As we often state in our field, **the greenest building is one that is already built..**

Moreover, the Hall of Administration, along with the Stanley Mosk Courthouse, is a significant **Mid-Century Modern landmark** central to the Civic Center's identity. The building was designed by a consortium that included **Paul R. Williams**, the revered and gifted **first African-American member (and FAIA) of the AIA**. Protecting this building is an act of preserving a critical part of Los Angeles's history.

Envisioning a Modern, Connected Civic Asset

The current cost challenge is a moment to embrace a more visionary approach. A comprehensive reuse strategy would allow the County to transform the facility, delivering a modern, fresh, and high-performing civic building. The structure offers immense flexibility for **new uses, even the potential of housing on the upper floors**, and provides a strong ability to increase the connection with **Grand Park**, bringing necessary **commerce and public vibrancy** to the ground floor. In addition we must evaluate the building's potential within a broader, comprehensive **Master Plan** for the entire Civic Center district.

Immediate Call to Action

The decision to spend \$700M on a retrofit or to demolish a building of this magnitude demands the utmost scrutiny and a commitment to exploring multiple viable alternatives. I respectfully recommend that the Board take the following actions:

1. **Immediately put a pause** on any discussions about the demolition of the Hall of Administration.
2. **Allow** independent and transparent alternative studies for techniques to increase the seismic safety at a significantly lower cost and for additional ways to utilize the building for public use, engage with the park and provide public benefit.

I am confident that a responsible review will demonstrate that there are many alternative solutions which would significantly reduce the construction costs for a seismic retrofit, upgrade and save the building from demolition and create a more vibrant and thriving Civic Center.

Sincerely,



Karin Liljegren, FAIA
Founder + Owner