

MOTION

After years of enduring one of the worst droughts in California history, it is urgently incumbent on the City of Los Angeles to modernize its water management practices to better conserve water and to reduce the amount of water imported into the city. One area where the city’s water management practices could benefit from improvement is the practice of “dewatering” at construction sites.

Dewatering is a construction practice where water is removed from the ground around a property to facilitate subterranean development. Dewatering is particularly prevalent where water tables are high nearer to our coast, though dewatering can be a necessity for subterranean development anywhere in the City. The dewatering process often lasts months, and in some cases even years. Large amounts of water are being effectively flushed down the drain and neighbors who are doing their part to conserve water - limiting the days they water their lawns and taking shorter showers - understandably feel like their conservation efforts are similarly being flushed down the drain when they witness dewatering in action.


No formal study has been undertaken on the best practices of other cities in recapturing and reusing water generated from dewatering. While the subterranean development often makes good use of space in our otherwise crowded metropolis, we need to explore all available options for reuse and recapture of the pumped water during the construction process. With no clear justification provided for the city’s current dewatering practice, the city should investigate the practice and determine if the practice can be improved to minimize waste.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Chief Legislative Analyst, Bureau of Engineering, Department of Water and Power, and Bureau of Sanitation report to the City Council about:

- Strategies to recapture and recycle the groundwater from dewatering activities associated with construction and development;
- If other jurisdictions have undertaken similar efforts to regulate dewatering practices, and what the costs and benefits have been in other jurisdictions; and
- If dewatering has any negative impacts on the city’s stormwater management program.


I FURTHER MOVE that the CLA and City Attorney prepare and present a report to the City Council that analyzes the ability of the City, through legislation, to cap the length of time allowed for dewatering, or to add dewatering fees to development projects in order to disincentivize wasteful dewatering practices.

PRESENTED BY:



MIKE BONIN
Councilmember, 11th District

SECONDED BY:



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