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MOTION

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Fundamental sanitation services in the City have evolved over the 158-year history of Los Angeles from basic provision of trash removal and sewage disposal into what are now myriad and complex environmental programs. From the founding of El Pueblo in 1781 to the early years after incorporation of the City in 1851, there were no sanitary sewers. Management of solid waste simply meant dumping it along the outskirts of town or even in the streets.

In 1906, the Board of Public Works was formed and sanitation services were transferred to it from the Board of Health. In 1941, the Bureau of Sanitation was created and given responsibility for providing sanitation services driven by the protection of public health.

The City population grew exponentially after WWII and the need for basic sanitation services grew with it. The environmental impact of the millions of people who flocked to the City created a new community value. In addition to protecting the public health, it became increasingly important to also protect the environment.

In 1947, the Bureau undertook a major expansion of what was then only a primitive screening facility at the Hyperion Treatment Plant and introduced primary treatment of its wastewater effluent. In the early 1950s, the Bureau introduced the first formal curbside recycling program that lasted until 1965 until it was later re-initiated.

Federal and state environmental legislation began to reshape the mission of the Bureau to protect both public health and the environment. The passage of the federal Clean Water Act of 1972 brought about the transformation of our Wastewater (Cleanwater) Program with such monumental achievements like the cessation of ocean disposal of sludge (biosolids) in 1987.

On the Solid Resources side, toxic contamination of groundwater caused by poorly designed landfills in the 1950s brought about the federal Resource Recovery Act and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act in 1970 and 1976, respectively. Subsequently, the State passed AB 939 in 1989, which required all cities to recycle 50% of all solid waste generated by 2000.

The Bureau's modern-day responsibilities encompass not only "sanitation," such as the disposal of solid waste and wastewater, but have expanded to encompass resource conservation and recovery and protection of our watersheds, waterways, oceans and beaches. In fact, the Bureau of Sanitation's officially adopted mission statement reads "our mission is to protect public health and the environment."

In the 21st century, the Bureau is responsible for ensuring that the City meets multiple environmental mandates from the federal and state governments. All three core programs (Solid Resources, Clean Water, and Watershed Protection) have daily quality of life impacts on every resident. The Bureau's 2,900 employees are dedicated to protecting public health and making LA the cleanest, greenest big city in America using principles of sustainability.

In recognition of the Bureau's modern-day mission that includes the protection of the environment, it is appropriate that a review be conducted to assess the viability of updating and changing the Bureau's name to be reflective of their present-day charge. Preliminary suggested names include: Bureau of Environmental Services, Bureau of Environmental Management, Bureau of Environmental Protection, and Bureau of Environmental Resources.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Bureau of Sanitation, in conjunction with the Board of Public Works, Chief Legislative Analyst and the City Administrative Officer, report to the Council in 90 days on the viability of, and potential options for, an environmentally-oriented name change for the Bureau of Sanitation.

PRESENTED BY:

JAN PERRY
Councilmember, 9th District

SECONDED BY:

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