

**Trashing LA: Increased Fees, Political Favors, Dirty Deeds**

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LA WATCHDOG - In return for campaign contributions of \$500,000 by the notoriously corrupt Teamsters Union, Mayor Villaraigosa and his politically appointed, highly paid, and inexperienced cronies on the Board of Public Works are willing to stick commercial establishments and apartment buildings with a \$150 million increase in trash collection fees through the establishment of eleven Exclusive Trash Franchises.

And in return, the Teamsters Union will be in the position to collect millions in dues and political contributions from the newly unionized employees of the politically favored private trash haulers who are granted the exclusive trash franchises.

In trying to promote the Exclusive Trash Franchise system, the Mayor has enlisted the environmental community in a manner similar to the Clean Truck Program at the Port of Los Angeles.

The environmental proponents of the Exclusive Trash Franchise system argue that the new system will result in increased recycling and diversion of trash, and, at the same time, in lower levels of vehicle emissions, traffic, and noise, all through the use of alternative fuel vehicles and more efficient collection routes by the exclusive operator.

However, the Mayor, the City Council's Ad Hoc Committee on Waste Reduction (Councilmen Alarcon, Huizar, Koretz, and Krekorian), and the Andrea Alarcon led Board of Public Works have conveniently neglected to consider that the existing open permit, non exclusive system has resulted in a 65% diversion rate, the highest of any big city in the nation.

The proponents of the Exclusive Trash Franchise system have also not presented any meaningful data outlining how the new system, its requirements for alternative fuel vehicles, and claims of more efficient routing will result in lower vehicle emissions.

Interestingly, at the Port of Los Angeles, the City was able to dramatically exceed its environmental goals through the mandated use of alternative fuel trucks without relying on the Teamster favored "employee provision" that would have banned independent owner operators from the Port in favor of Teamster organized company drivers.

However, the Port, at the behest of the Mayor, incurred an estimated \$15 million in legal fees and expenses fighting the trucking industry's successful lawsuit against the Clean Truck Program's "employee provision" favored by the campaign funding Teamsters.

As an aside, this bare knuckles battle with the trucking industry trashed the reputation of the Port with many importers and shippers, resulting in the diversion of cargo to other ports. This diversion will result in less cargo flowing through the Port and in less trade related jobs in our already stressed economy.

More than likely, the environmental goal of lower vehicle emissions can be achieved through the introduction of alternative fuel vehicles without implementing the Exclusive Trash Franchise system that is opposed by a vast majority of the trash haulers and their customers.

Several large private trash haulers have also indicated that Exclusive Trash Franchises will not result in more efficient routing, especially for commercial establishments that have special requirements or multiple locations.

Furthermore, the current open permit system is favored by commercial establishments and apartment owners because it provides for more competitive pricing and better service. For example, studies have indicated that prices are at least 60% higher in cities that have Exclusive Trash Franchises.

Rather than promoting Exclusive Trash Franchises, the Board of Public Works and the Bureau of Sanitation should review the operations of the City's rather inefficient residential trash collection system and even consider the establishment of a Public Private Partnership for this capital intensive operation.

Overall, the proposed Exclusive Trash Franchise is just another "Dirty Deed" (a term coined by Steve Lopez of The Los Angeles Times) that contributes to the ever growing corruption in Los Angeles, the second dirtiest city in the country after Chicago.

And we, the citizens of Los Angeles, are the ultimate victims of this sleaze as we will end up footing the bill for the Exclusive Trash Franchises and the lower level of economic activity as employers flee City Hall's corrupt culture.

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