

Heal the Bay

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August 5, 2011

Chair Jan Perry and Committee Members  
Energy and Environment Committee

200 N. Spring Street, Rm 420

Los Angeles, 90012

Via fax: (213) 473-5946

**Re: Support of City of Los Angeles Cleanwater (Wastewater) Program Rate Adjustment**

Dear Chair Perry and Committee Members:

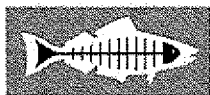
On behalf of Heal the Bay and our over 12,000 members, I write in strong support of the proposed sewer service charge rate increase. Twenty-six years ago, Heal the Bay was founded upon the issue of decaying wastewater infrastructure in the city and we have closely followed wastewater issues in the city ever since.

After many years of rebuilding Hyperion and other wastewater treatment plants, and replacing sewer lines that were well beyond their safe useful life, the City went from one of the poorest systems with more than two sewage spills a day to one of the most reliable major systems in the country. The Bureau of Sanitation has transformed the sewer system to a reliable, well-managed infrastructure.

Unfortunately, the last few years of belt tightening to spare ratepayer fee increases have come at a cost. We do not want to return to the days of decaying infrastructure and threats to public health. Infrastructure repair capital projects must continue to be a priority for the city.

Heal the Bay has analyzed the list of proposed wastewater projects, and they are all basic needs to keep the sewer system functioning efficiently and safely. Even with the fee increases, the sewer service charges will put the city near the average of sewer service charges for major US cities.

Of note, although the sewer service charge cannot fund rainwater capture and water recycling projects - an overwhelming water quality and water supply reliability need for LA, the Committee should continue to explore ways to fund elements of the Integrated Resources Plan.



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In conclusion, Heal the Bay strongly supports the proposed sewer service charge in order to upgrade, operate and maintain sewer infrastructure to protect public health and the environment. We urge the Committee to move forward this item to Council as soon as possible.

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Sincerely,

Mark Gold, D. Env  
President

cc: Adel Hagekhalil



August 5, 2011

Councilmember Jan Perry

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Chair, Energy & Environment Committee  
Los Angeles City Council  
200 North Spring Street, Room 420  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

By Fax: 213-473-5946

RE: Support Increased fees for Clean Water (Wastewater) Program

Dear Councilmember Perry,

I write on behalf of the Green LA Coalition Urban Ecosystems Work Group, which includes: TreePeople, So CA Watershed Council, The River Project, Heal the Bay, Food & Water Watch, City Vida and others. We agree it is critical to raise revenues for the City's clean water and water management goals.

When I testified before this committee in May, Green LA's concern with the sewer fees increase was that the public was also to be asked to weigh in on increasing their DWP bill and later to vote on a County parcel tax for stormwater abatement. We were concerned that residents would be fatigued and confused. We asked that the City create a clear and coordinated message to explain why all these water-related revenue requests are necessary. We had several conversations with General Manager Enrique Zaldivar and General Manager Ron Nichols and their staff. Both departments agreed that better integrated messaging was necessary but difficult.

We ask that the Los Angeles City Council help improve the actual integration between wastewater and stormwater programs. We need seamless policies and laws that eliminates any contradictions between wastewater and stormwater goals and enable city departments to better coordinate projects to achieve cost efficiencies.

In closing, the City of Los Angeles must adequately invest in maintaining our sewer infrastructure to meet all of our water management and supply goals. We urge you to support the Bureau of Sanitation's request to increase Clean Water Program fees. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephanie Taylor".

Stephanie Taylor  
Managing Director

CC: Adel Hagekhalil