

LOCAL 721



**SERVICE EMPLOYEES
INTERNATIONAL UNION, CFW, CLC**

September 9, 2011

Councilmember Jan Perry
Chair, Energy and Environment Committee
200 N. Spring Street, Room 420
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Support of the Clean Water (Wastewater) Program Rate Proposal, CF 10-1947

Honorable Councilmember:

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The Service Employees International Union Local 721 (SEIU 721) is in full support of the City of Los Angeles' Bureau of Sanitation Clean Water Program rate proposal. The proposal is currently before your committee. We urge you to approve this proposal and forward to the full City Council.


The members of SEIU 721 recognize the need for a well-functioning wastewater collection and treatment system to help protect public health and the environment and drive a strong economy. The investment that will be funded from the future rates will help ensure that the sewer overflows that were too common ten years ago will not return. We also realize that the investment in our infrastructure will provide needed jobs for our community.

We commend the Bureau of Sanitation for its outreach to and engagement of LA residents and stakeholders, and working with us in joint labor-management process. Through the JLM process, the Bureau has enhanced its operation and reduced its operational costs while providing first-class service to our residents. Over the last two years alone, the Bureau has cut costs by \$27 million in the wastewater system. It has realized savings of over \$400 million over the last five years through efficient operational and fiscal management. As a result, the Bureau was able to meet its obligations without the need for rate adjustments for 14 out of the last 20 years, including the last three years.

And yet, despite cost reductions by the Bureau and sacrifices by our union members, the wastewater system is getting older by the day – putting our communities at risk for breaks, spills and odors. It also exposes the city to higher costs and financial liabilities. We must invest proactively in order to maintain and upgrade our essential wastewater facilities. It is the right thing to do. The Bureau's proposed 10-year financial plan and rate proposal is reasonable, responsible and supports this necessary investment.

In conclusion, we urge you, your committee and the City Council to approve the Clean Water Program rate proposal. It is in the best interest of everyone who lives, works, and visits Los Angeles.

Sincerely,


Jason Elias
Regional Coordinator

<http://www.seiu721.org>

cc: City Council members
Enrique C. Zaldivar, Bureau of Sanitation

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