

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

HISTORIC HIGHLAND PARK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

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Certified as NC #33 May 28, 2002

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January 7, 2016

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

cc: Members of the Los Angeles City Council & the City Clerk's office

Re: Oppose Governor Brown's Twin Tunnels project [CF 12-1909-S1]

The Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council, which represents over 60,000 Los Angeles stakeholders who reside, own property, or conduct business in our neighborhood, would like to urge Mayor Garcetti and the members of the Los Angeles City Council to take a strong position against Governor Brown's Twin Tunnel project.

The project was originally given the misnomer 'Bay-Delta Conservation Plan' as it claimed it would restore fish and wildlife ecosystems in the Sacramento Delta. Now better known as the Twin Tunnels project or the so-called California Water Fix, it has been revealed as primarily benefiting high-water demand Central Valley almond growers and could cost taxpayers up to \$67 billion for the construction of twin tunnels to divert the Sacramento River, destroying delta habitats and transferring a significant portion of the costs to Los Angeles ratepayers... without Los Angeles ever receiving a drop of water.

We urge you, Mayor Garcetti, to prohibit the use of City ratepayer and taxpayer money to finance this project and, furthermore, request you direct your appointees on the Metropolitan Water District Board of Directors to reject any motion that furthers it. We also ask that these appointees be directed to represent the interests of Los Angeles ratepayers and taxpayers rather than the Central Valley Kern County Water Agency and Westlands Water District, as well as the Metropolitan Water District itself.

Your Executive Directive No. 5 on Emergency Drought Response called for the City to reduce its dependence on imported potable water by 50% by 2024. The Twin Tunnels project undermines Los Angeles' water resilience, take funds away from the creation of the thousands of local jobs necessary to fulfill your mandate under the directive, and would primarily benefit special interests outside of the City, all at the expense of Los Angeles ratepayers.

Press reports indicate the cost of the tunnels, with interest, to be as high as \$67 billion. And an independent analysis conducted in 2012, almost four years ago, by an independent economic research

firm found that based on a total cost estimate of \$47 billion, the tunnels would cost Los Angeles ratepayers \$7.5 billion dollars.

That was four years ago and as, historically, these large scale projects rarely come in on time or on budget and while the Twin Tunnels project would not deliver any additional water to the City, Los Angeles and its stakeholders would still be on the hook for the construction and debt service costs of the Governor's plan regardless of how much water LADWP imports from the Delta, as much as \$10 billion through ever-increasing water bills to subsidize the profits of a few powerful corporate interests.

The Twin Tunnels project is a bad deal for Los Angeles, particularly at a time when major investments are needed to improve the City's aging infrastructure and embody your sustainability and resilience goals. The agricultural interests in the Central Valley who stand to benefit do not take the same conservation approach that the City does, and use 50% MORE water than the entire City of Los Angeles on an annual basis. And while our use under your leadership is going down, theirs is rising with the planting of additional thousands of acres of almonds requiring even more water than normal due to the toxicity of their soil.

Increasing our locally-generated water supply and fixing local infrastructure would create thousands of jobs in the City. A 2011 report estimated that water efficiency measures in Los Angeles create more jobs per million dollars invested than either motion picture/video production or housing construction: for every \$1 million invested in water efficiency-related projects, 12.6 to 16.6 jobs are created and nearly \$2 million in total sales go toward benefiting our economy.

We strongly support the reduction of the City's dependence on imported water and increasing local water supply sources such as storm water recapture, replenishing groundwater aquifers, and progressive recycling practices and want ratepayer money to go to these needed investments, not wasted on a long term special interest-driven boondoggle.

However, your representatives on the Metropolitan Water District's Board of Directors voted to increase property taxes on LA residents for the third year in a row, including over \$300 million specifically earmarked for the Twin Tunnels project (and including overcharging Los Angeles ratepayer a sum which the City should insist be returned). In addition, they recently approved buying islands in the Delta, a significant first step in constructing the tunnels which will, again, significantly increase water rates.

Therefore, the Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council urges you, Mayor Garcetti, to direct your appointees on the Metropolitan Water District's Board of Directors to vote AGAINST any future measure that would permit the funding or progress of the Twin Tunnel project and FOR the interests of our City and its stakeholders. And have the City focus on more sustainable water resilience projects such as those in your directive, those on the books at the Department of Sanitation and those under discussion at the LADWP.

Sincerely,



Monica Alcaraz, President
Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council