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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - OCTOBER 14, 2009

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Greig Smith Council District 12



LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCILMAN GREIG SMITH

Councilman Smith Introduces Motion to Create Inspector General Position to Serve as DWP Watchdog

Los Angeles – Councilman Greig Smith introduced a motion on Wednesday, October 14, to create an Inspector General position to serve as an independent watchdog that would review and report on the operations and management actions of the Department of Water and Power (DWP) in order to help restore the public’s trust in the DWP.

The Inspector General would have complete and unfettered access to all records, personnel meetings, key documents and contracts at all times. The Inspector General would report findings directly to the public without interference from the DWP’s Board of Water and Power Commissioners, the Office of the Mayor, the City Council, Neighborhood Councils, or special interest groups.

“In order to regain the public’s confidence, we must move strongly and quickly to improve transparency and accountability at the DWP,” Councilman Smith said. “An Inspector General who provides independent review of the DWP’s infrastructure implementation, operations and maintenance, administration, rates, renewables program, implementation and contracting, will help achieve this goal.”

Over the past year, a variety of problems related to DWP have impacted the residents and businesses of Los Angeles, raising serious concerns and degrading public trust in the agency’s management and handling of critical issues. A recent series of water main breaks and the DWP’s conservation rate increases and mandatory conservation measures limiting lawn watering to twice a week have further impacted the ratepayers and degraded the public’s trust in the agency.

The DWP’s infrastructure has been consistently deteriorating, while operations and maintenance resources to support it have been declining, raising serious concerns among ratepayers about the ways that DWP has used public funds to upgrade and maintain its infrastructure.

There has been a lack of transparency about how the funds from the DWP’s base rate increases will be spent and when improvements will be made.

The DWP’s management of its renewables program has been questioned by ratepayers as the agency sought pass-through increases to support its implementation and commensurate power purchase agreements. The Council recently stalled an electric pass-through increase designed to provide funding for renewable efforts. The Council requested that DWP conduct further reviews of the matter and assess the total impact of renewable efforts before it returns with a proposal.

These issues, and others like them, have caused alarm and skepticism among L.A. residents, who have been very supportive of L.A.’s environmental efforts and have consistently exceeded the goals for water conservation.

The Inspector General would be able to assemble an independent review panel of experts to review critical and controversial matters, and would have an office within the DWP headquarters to facilitate access to information.

This move is consistent with Councilman Smith’s ongoing efforts to improve transparency at the DWP, including his 2004 motion that now requires all DWP rate increase proposals to undergo independent third party review.

Council President Eric Garcetti and Councilmember Jan Perry seconded the motion.