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LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL ASSESSES ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

***Clean air, clean water, land-use management, and environmental justice
top first-ever single topic council meeting agenda***

Clean air, clean water, land-use management, and environmental justice topped the issues that the Los Angeles City Council discussed as part of a meeting focused on environmental challenges facing the City. The meeting was the first-ever single topic meeting convened by the City Council.

On Tuesday, key City Departments presented to the Council a status report on current environmental initiatives as well as opportunities they have identified to improve services and operations to help make Los Angeles cleaner and greener.

The environmental issue-focused meeting is the first of five single topic council meetings that the City Council will hold. Earlier this year, City Councilmembers decided to hold these meetings to provide an opportunity for more comprehensive discussions on key issues in the City. In addition to providing a forum for shaping policy, these meetings will also help inform City budget decisions. Future topics include public safety, transit, infrastructure, and housing and homelessness.

"Clean air, clean water, and open space for families to enjoy are fundamental to our health and quality of life. I am strongly committed to a cleaner, greener L.A. Today's meeting with a special focus on environmental issues is a great step toward a more comprehensive plan for sustainable living in Los Angeles," said Council President Eric Garcetti.

"We are one of the most park-poor cities in the nation," said Councilmember Ed. P. Reyes. "Today's City Council meeting on environmental issues allows us to really scrutinize ideas for land-use and open space to best serve the people of Los Angeles. Projects such as L.A. River Revitalization Master Plan are examples of how creative we can be about how we integrate green space into a City map of such diverse age, ethnic and income levels."

"Unfortunately, we are among the most park-poor cities in the nation and have some of the worst air quality. Having a Council meeting dedicated to the environment will allow us to think of the future and plan for our children," said Councilwoman Wendy Greuel. "It is imperative that we focus on this issue right now because we have reached a unique moment in our city's history where we can still preserve what is left of our open space for future generations."

(more)

"Global environmental improvements require regional efforts and partnerships among all levels of government, business, and the community. I am optimistic that by focusing attention on environmental issues this week the City will send a strong message of its commitment to planning and acting in a more sustainable manner," said Councilmember Jack Weiss who also serves as Chair of the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission.

"I am pleased that the City Council has chosen to formulate comprehensive policy initiatives during an open discussion and public debate. The environment is not district specific nor does it have any political affiliation, it impacts everyone! I look forward to this new process which will establish broad versus incremental council support on singular issues," said Councilmember Bernard Parks.

"As a City, we have made great strides toward improving our air quality, cleaning our waterways, and creating a greener future for Los Angelenos. Today's meeting is yet another way in which we are working together as a City Council to continue our momentum for the health and well-being of our entire region," said Councilmember Jan Perry.

"Government must lead by example in encouraging the development of a livable and sustainable city. That is our challenge," said Councilmember Herb Wesson.

"This is a great opportunity for us to focus on environmental concerns facing Los Angeles and the Southern California region," Councilmember Bill Rosendahl said. "From preserving and healing coastal wetlands to greening LAX, we must take a leadership role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions in our neighborhoods and communities, and reusing and renewing energy within City Departments and programs."

"Land use decisions on the placement of buildings, intermixed with parks, heavy commercial and industrial uses, or homes all lead to the need for policy making that is integrated across the entire spectrum of City activities and services, which is a major reason why this environmental initiative is so important," said Councilmember Greig Smith.

"It is time that we as a City take a look at the biggest polluter in the region, the Port of Los Angeles. We will be hearing about the Clean Air Action Plan that was recently adopted by the Port, as well as the impact of cargo trucks on our air quality and the current proposal to finally clean them up," said Councilmember Janice Hahn.

The meeting will continue on Wednesday, with representatives of environmental community organizations presenting their recommendations for improving existing and developing new environmental policy in the city. Organizations that will participate in the meeting include the Coalition for Clean Air, Global Green, Heal the Bay, Natural Resources Defense Council, TreePeople, Santa Monica Baykeeper, Center for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Technology, GREENLA, and East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice.

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