

DEC 18 2007

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

MOTION

PLANNING & LAND USE MANAGEMENT

The City of Los Angeles and all of Southern California are imminently threatened by one of the most potentially severe water shortages that the region has seen in many years. A perfect storm of historically low groundwater levels, low local rainfall, extended drought in the Colorado River watershed, below-average snowpack in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, and federal restrictions on water imports from the California State Water Project have placed an enormous strain on the Southland's water supply.

Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and the Department of Water and Power have already called upon Angelenos to voluntarily reduce their water usage by 10 percent. However, since that conservation campaign was launched in June 2007, water usage in the City of Los Angeles has actually increased by 1 percent. Los Angeles, like several other cities in the region, is on the brink of imposing mandatory water rationing.

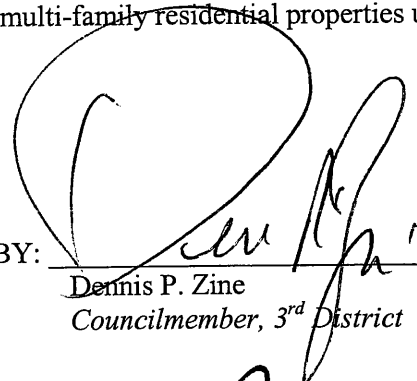
While an immediate reduction in water usage is highly important, the City must also look for ways to bring about permanent systemic change in the way we use water. It would be irresponsible to assume that the population of the City could continue to increase, and that residential development could intensify, without also realizing that such growth places an additional burden on the water system. The City must re-evaluate its planning and building regulations and enact new measures to require minimal water usage in all new residential development projects.

It is imperative that the City's water conservation strategy go beyond simple unit-by-unit requirements such as low-flow fixtures. Instead, a comprehensive macro-level land use policy should be developed that would require all new residential development to occupy a water-use "footprint" of 10 percent less than the previous usage of the property.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Department of City Planning, the Department of Building and Safety, and the Department of Water and Power report to the City Council with proposed regulations to limit water usage in all new single- and multi-family residential developments to an amount 10 percent less than the previous water usage of that same parcel. The report should include, among other things, proposed plumbing and irrigation requirements that would cut water use in both interior and exterior living spaces.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Department of Building and Safety be directed to cease the issuance of all new discretionary building permits for single- and multi-family residential properties until such water-conserving land use policies are enacted.

PRESENTED BY:



Dennis P. Zine
Councilmember, 3rd District

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SECONDED BY:

