

MOTION

FEB 20 2009

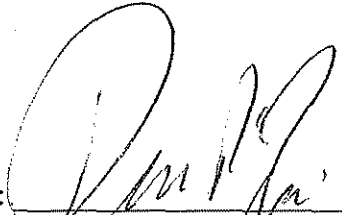
The City of Los Angeles and the entire State of California face an increasingly serious and unrelenting water shortage. Despite recent rain and snow storms, water levels across the region have reached dangerous lows. It has become clear that water conservation can no longer be a temporary public relations campaign but must instead become a permanent way of life.

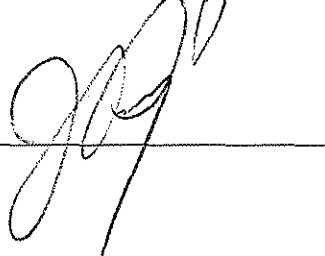
The City Council, the Mayor, and the Department of Water and Power (DWP) called upon Angelenos to voluntarily reduce their water usage by 10 percent in June 2007. In the following months, water usage in the City actually increased by 1 percent. Since that time, in August of 2008, the Council and Mayor approved a new Emergency Water Conservation Plan that placed further restrictions on wasteful water use. The City has also promoted ultra low-flow toilets, waterless urinals, smart sprinkler systems, artificial turf surfaces, and a variety of other conservation programs.

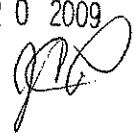
Of all the tools available to encourage the public to reduce water use, one remains the most powerful – the water bill. All single-family homes and some newer multi-family complexes have individual water meters. These meters give instant feedback to residents about how much water they are using, the change in usage over time, and ultimately determine the amount of their DWP bills. Most apartments and condominiums, however, do not have individual water meters. Instead, building owners or homeowners' associations pay one bill linked to a master meter. Residents do ultimately pay for water, but the cost is spread out among all units.

The lack of individual water meters in multi-family buildings severely limits residents' self-interest in reducing water usage. In order to further promote water conservation and to directly reward Los Angeles residents who reduce the amount of water they use, the City should require all new multi-family residential projects to install separate water meters for each unit.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Department of City Planning, the Department of Building and Safety, and the Department of Water and Power be instructed to report to the City Council with proposed regulations to require separate water meters for each unit in all new multi-family residential developments, and to offer incentives for existing multi-family buildings to be retrofitted with individual water meters.

PRESENTED BY: 
Dennis P. Zine
Councilmember, 3rd District

SECONDED BY: 

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