

PRESS RELEASE

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Greig Smith Council District 12



LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCILMAN GREIG SMITH

Councilman Smith Moves to Create City “Environmental Inspectors” With Legal Power to Stop Polluters

Los Angeles – Councilman Greig Smith proposed a City ordinance on Tuesday, March 6, that would allow the Environmental Affairs Department to issue “cease-and-desist” orders to any source of pollution that threatens public health or public safety.

“This will give our departments a tool to stop polluters that threaten our public health and safety in their tracks,” Councilman Smith said.

Currently, other agencies such as the County Health Department and the Regional Water Quality Board can issue cease-and-desist orders, giving them greater power to quickly stop significant environmental threats. Unfortunately, there are very few local inspectors and action can take days or weeks.

No City agency has that authority in dealing exclusively with environmental protection. City officials within Environmental Affairs, Fire Department, Building and Safety and other departments that discover serious environmental threats can cite the polluter, but (except in cases of certain hazardous materials) must wait for County or State agencies to stop the polluting activity.

The ordinance would create an “Environmental Inspector” position within the Environmental Affairs Department. The Environmental Inspectors would have the authority to issue initial cease-and-desist orders to first stop the polluting activity while the order is reviewed by the appropriate County, State or Federal authority.

This measure would enable the City to immediately stop polluting activities by such activities as illegal car repair shops or other businesses improperly operating in residential neighborhoods. Previously, such businesses would be cited by City Building and Safety inspectors, but continued their illegal activities while their cases were being processed and appealed.

Councilman Smith’s motion called for the relevant City departments to report on the feasibility of the ordinance and the Environmental Inspector position.

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Media Contact: Matt Myerhoff, Communications Director, Council District 12
(818) 613-2248 // Matt.Myerhoff@lacity.org