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COUNCILMEMBERS WEISS, GARCETTI, PERRY AND REYES SEE CLEAN WATERS AHEAD AS CITY MOVES BOND MEASURE TOWARDS BALLOT

Councilmembers Jack Weiss, Eric Garcetti, Jan Perry and Ed Reyes applauded the Los Angeles City Council's unanimous vote today to advance a proposal that would invest hundreds of millions of dollars in protecting the waterways and beaches of Los Angeles. The Council voted 12-0 to instruct the City Legislative Analyst and the City Attorney to draft a bond measure that can be placed on the November 2004 ballot. The measure would raise bond funds to pay for the city's compliance with the stringent federal Clean Water Act requirements, which protect Angelenos' recreational bodies of water from harmful pollutants, including trash, toxins and bacteria. After fighting these regulations in court for several years with limited success, the city has turned to the hard work of cleaning up its waterways and complying with the Act.

"The proposed bond is the first step to ensure that residents of Los Angeles will continue to have clean water," said Councilmember Jack Weiss. "It will protect the Santa Monica Bay, the Los Angeles River watershed, and our area lakes and parks."

"This bond issue is a down payment on a sparkling future," said Councilmember Eric Garcetti. "What better legacy can we leave Los Angeles' next generation than clean, healthy waterways? I look forward to putting this issue before the voters."

"This bond has potential environmental impacts that are certain to change the future of our city by improving water quality and expanding the potential for creative green space," said Councilmember Perry, who chairs the council's Environmental Quality committee. "Additionally, the bond will allow us to proactively approach issues like flooding, allowing for the creation of wetlands and open space along the Los Angeles River."

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“Come November, Angelenos will be given a wonderful opportunity to address the manner in which we clean our waterways,” said Councilmember Reyes, chair of the Council’s Ad Hoc Committee on the Los Angeles River. “Moreover, I believe voters will support this measure particularly because of the multiple benefits that can come from the passage of this bond.”

Los Angeles must comply with the mandates of the federal Clean Water Act, which require the city to address the large volume of trash and other pollutants that wash off city streets and enter the rivers and the Santa Monica Bay. The mandates break down into 67 Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), each of which limits the amounts of particular pollutants that can be found in the city’s waterways. The exact number for each TMDL requires deep scientific study; the dry-weather bacteria TMDL took several years to develop and the nitrogen TMDL is nearly complete.

The city has until September 2006 to reduce trash by 20%, and until the year 2015 to eliminate trash completely. Projects envisioned under this bond measure include grassy parks that naturally filter storm water in a rainstorm, catch basin inserts that stop trash from reaching the waterways, and the simple but effective protection of more frequent street cleaning. The issuance would raise \$500 million plus a fee that amounts to 5% of the construction costs of the various water protection projects.

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