



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **COUNCIL APPROVES \$202 MILLION TO CLEAN URBAN LAKES**

**\$30 MILLION MORE FOR ADDITIONAL WATER QUALITY PROJECTS**

The Los Angeles City Council approved funding for two of the largest water quality improvement projects in the city's history, Echo Park Lake and Lake Machado. Funded by the city's \$500 million water quality bond Proposition O, the projects will restore the two lakes' ability to hold urban runoff and will install new measures to clean captured storm water before it reaches the Los Angeles River and Dominguez Channel.

"With Proposition O, voters gave us the means and the mandate to clean up Los Angeles' water," said Council President Eric Garcetti, who in 2004 led the charge to pass the bond, and whose district includes Echo Park Lake. "The lake is not just the crowning jewel of Echo Park; it is the collection point for the entire area's urban runoff. Treating the lake will make the entire region cleaner. Our action today will get the lake off of the federal government's TMDL non-compliance list, it will reduce the bacteria count to healthy levels, and it will eliminate pollution from downstream."

"Since I was elected in 2001, I have been looking for ways to clean up Machado Lake," said Councilwoman Janice Hahn, whose district includes the lake. "This funding will finally allow us to thoroughly clean up this lake, revitalizing this treasure in the Harbor Area. I believe that this is exactly what the voters of Los Angeles envisioned when they passed Proposition O in 2004."

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"The passage of these two projects today represent a real win for the people of Los Angeles. Both the underlying purpose of Prop O, as they will continue our efforts to clean our waterways through innovative projects that create and promote community amenities like wetlands and recreation space," added Councilwoman Jan Perry who Chairs the City's Energy and the Environment Committee and co-authored Prop O.

The city's water quality is measured by compliance with a standard known as Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), which represent the maximum allowable amount of a particular pollutant present in a particular watershed on any given day. TMDL milestones have been designed for 67 separate pollutants in the various watersheds throughout the city, ranging from trash to sediments to metals. Echo Park Lake and Lake Machado capture runoff from the entire area. Each became so polluted that the Regional Water Quality Control Board has designated specific TMDLs for each lake.

Project engineers designed each project to provide multiple community benefits. The Echo Park Lake Project will include partial wetlands with vegetation rock formations at the northeast end of the lake, designed to filter out bacteria and other pollutants that enter through the channel that funnels to that corner of the lake. Similarly, the Lake Machado project will include the construction of a freshwater marsh designed to capture trash that flows into the lake. The improvements will not only improve downstream water quality but will restore the various recreational uses of each lake, including canoeing and fishing.

The city council approved an additional \$30 million for four other projects that will provide water quality benefits to the Harbor area and the Sun Valley area.

Passed by voters with 76% of the vote in November of 2004, Proposition O is the first municipal bond dedicated to cleaning up urban runoff. Previous expenditures allowed the city to comply with its 2006 Trash TMDL milestone, the only city in the state to do so. Other projects funded by Proposition O have included construction of the South Los Angeles Wetlands, the conversion of a 30-acre gravel pit in Sun Valley into a storm water retention and treatment basin, and the upgrade of eight low-flow diversions in the Santa Monica Bay that will screen bacteria out of the watershed before reaching the ocean.

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