

REMARKS BY COUNCILMEMBER ERIC GARCETTI AT THE OPENING OF BIMINI-SLOUGH ECOLOGY PARK

January 15, 2004

THANK YOU, REVEREND CARR. AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR
TREMENDOUS LEADERSHIP IN THIS COMMUNITY AND IN THIS CITY.
AS HE MENTIONED REVEREND CARR HAS CALLED ON US MANY TIMES
FOR MANY THINGS AND WE ARE ALWAYS HAPPY TO OBLIGE, THOUGH
I DID THINK HE WENT A LITTLE TOO FAR WHEN HE CALLED ME AT
11PM ONE NIGHT TO COME FIX A FLAT TIRE ON HIS CAR.

(laughter)

BUT IT IS WITH GREAT JOY THAT I JOIN YOU TODAY FOR THE
OPENING OF THE BIMINI-SLOUGH ECOLOGY PARK, THE EIGHTH NEW
PARK AND GREEN SPACE I HAVE HAD THE HONOR OF OPENING IN THE
LAST TWO AND A HALF YEARS. BUT BEFORE WE TAKE IN THE
PRESENT, LET US REMEMBER THE PAST.

IN THE DEPTH OF WINTER, WE HAVE ALWAYS FELT THE SUMMER
HERE IN LOS ANGELES. 101 YEARS AGO, AT THE WESTERN
OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY, A PLACE FOR RECREATION OPENED CALLED
THE BIMINI BATHS. IT WAS THE LARGEST BATHHOUSE OUTSIDE OF SAN

FRANCISCO TO OPEN ON THE WEST COAST. NESTLED IN EUCALYPTUS GROVES BEYOND THE HILLS OF WESTLAKE OIL FIELD IN A "RATHER REMOTE LOCATION", WITH 112 DEGREE WATER BUBBLING UP FOR EVERYONE'S ENJOYMENT, THE BIMINI BATHS WAS A PLACE WHERE THE CITY CAME TOGETHER. IN FACT, ANGELENOS USED TO SEND POSTCARDS TO RELATIVES ON THE EAST COAST IN JANUARY WITH PICTURES OF THE SUN AND THE BATHS, SHOWING OFF THEIR LUCK AS RESIDENTS OF LOS ANGELES.

FOR HALF A CENTURY, THE BATHS WERE A POPULAR PLACE TO MEET. BUT IN 1951, OUT OF FASHION AND OUT OF MONEY, THE BATHS CLOSED THEIR DOORS. AND FOR THE NEXT FIFTY YEARS, THIS AREA GREW. AND GREW. AND GREW. NO LONGER THE WESTERN EDGE OF THE CITY, IN THE NEXT HALF-CENTURY, THIS AREA HAS BECOME ONE OF THE MOST POPULATED AREAS OF THE UNITED STATES, SECOND IN DENSITY ONLY TO MANHATTAN.

BUT AS MORE AND MORE PEOPLE CAME TO THIS AREA FROM ALL CORNERS OF THIS COUNTRY AND THIS WORLD, WE IN GOVERNMENT FORGOT TO PROVIDE THE BASIC NECESSITIES OF LIFE, AN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR HUMAN DIGNITY TO THIS AREA. AS OUR STUDENT POPULATIONS SOARED, WE BUILT NO NEW SCHOOLS. AS

OUR TRAFFIC INCREASED, WE STRUGGLED TO CONSTRUCT A SYSTEM OF PUBLIC TRANSIT. AND AS FAMILIES, YOUNG PEOPLE AND SENIORS FLOODED THE AREA, WE DID NOTHING TO BUILD NEW PARKS AND GREEN SPACES.

MY PREDECESSOR, JACKIE GOLDBERG ONCE TOLD ME A STORY ABOUT HOW JUST A FEW YEARS AGO, UP THE STREET ON VERMONT, THE COMMUNITY WAS CELEBRATING THE OPENING OF ANOTHER PARK. IT WAS THE LARGEST NEW RECREATIONAL FACILITY TO BE ADDED TO THE AREA IN YEARS. UNFORTUNATELY, IT WAS A MCDONALD'S PLAY PLACE, BUT IN A RECREATION-STARVED NEIGHBORHOOD, IT WAS STILL A WELCOME ADDITION.

IF WE HAD MET HERE LAST YEAR, I COULD HAVE TOLD YOU THAT YOU WERE STANDING IN THE MOST CROWDED, STRUGGLING, PARK-POOR NEIGHBORHOOD IN THE DENSEST COUNCIL DISTRICT. TODAY, WE ARE STILL CROWDED. WE ARE STILL STRUGGLING. BUT WE ARE STANDING IN ONE OF THE RICHEST, GREENEST SPOTS ON THE PLANET.

WELCOME TO THE FUTURE. FOR TODAY IT IS HERE.

THE BRESEE ECOLOGY PARK IS OUR CITY'S FIRST "E-PARK." THE "E" STANDS FOR ECOLOGY AND FOR ELECTRONIC, AS WELL.

OUR CITY IS RIGHT NOW JOINING A NATIONAL MOVEMENT FOR A CLEANER ENVIRONMENT. IN PARTICULAR, WE HAVE BEGUN TAKING THE LEAD TOWARDS COMPLIANCE WITH THE FEDERAL CLEAN WATER ACT. OUR WATER SYSTEMS ARE PLAGUED BY URBAN RUNOFF, THE TRASH AND CONTAMINANTS THAT GET INTO OUR WATERWAYS AND OCEANS WHEN WE THROW TRASH ON OUR STREETS.

THE COST OF CLEANING UP THE WATER ONCE IT IS POLLUTED IS CRIPPLING. BUT THE ECOLOGY PARK SETS US DOWN A NEW PATH FOR TENDING OUR ENVIRONMENT. IT TEACHES US THAT EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US IS A STEWARD OF OUR URBAN ECOLOGY AND MUST ACT RESPONSIBLY TO MAKE OUR HOME CLEAN.

THIS PARK ACTS AS A GIANT, SAFE GREEN FILTER. IT CLEANS THE ENVIRONMENT. ITS MARSHY BIO-SWALE AND ROOT SYSTEMS CATCH POLLUTANTS AND PREVENT THEM FROM REACHING OUR BEACHES, WHILE KEEPING THEM AWAY FROM PEOPLE WHO USE THE PARK. IT'S A MODEL THAT BRINGS OUR WORST ACTIONS IN THE PAST INTO THE OPEN LIGHT, WHILE SHOWING US THE POTENTIAL FOR A HEALTHIER,

GREENER FUTURE.

SECOND, I'M PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE BRESEE FOUNDATION HAS MADE THIS AN E-PARK BY INSTALLING A WIRELESS NETWORK. WATCH OUT STARBUCKS; YOU DON'T HAVE TO BUY A CUP OF COFFEE TO USE THIS WI-FI. YOU CAN COME HERE WITH YOUR LAPTOP AND GET ON-LINE WHILE SITTING IN THE SUN AND ENJOYING THE NATURAL SURROUNDINGS.

HENRY DAVID THOREAU ONCE WROTE, "IN WILDNESS IS THE SALVATION OF THE WORLD." PERHAPS THE RENEWAL OF OUR CITY'S ECOLOGY IN THE SWALE WILL INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION'S HENRY DAVID THOREAU TO CONTEMPLATE THE RENEWAL OF HIS OR HER OWN SPIRIT. PERHAPS THE WIRELESS CONNECTION IN THIS PARK WILL TRANSMIT, IN BITS AND BYTES, THE NEXT GENERATION'S WALDEN. PERHAPS JUST AROUND THE CORNER FROM US, A YOUNG BOY OR GIRL, WHOSE PARENTS WERE BORN IN ANOTHER COUNTRY WILL COME THIS AFTERNOON TO THE BRESEE ECOLOGY PARK TO SIT, AND TO HEAR HIS OR HER OWN VOICE BLOSSOM.

COULD WE ASK FOR ANYTHING BETTER THAN THAT?

THANKS AGAIN TO EVERYONE WHO MADE THIS POSSIBLE—THE CITY DEPARTMENTS WHO ANSWERED OUR CALLS, MY STAFF, WHO WORKED TIRELESSLY ON THIS, MY PREDECESSOR, JACKIE GOLDBERG, AND THE GOOD WORK OF THE MAYOR. AND, LASTLY, THE COMMUNITY. WITHOUT YOUR VISION HERE AT BRESEE, NONE OF THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE.

CONGRATULATIONS.