

MAY 13 2008

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

MOTION

The City of Los Angeles collects a Sewer Service Charge (SSC) from City residents and building owners in order to maintain a reliable, safe, and efficient sewer system. The SSC is calculated using a method established by the Bureau of Sanitation, which is part of the Department of Public Works. This calculation method seeks to charge users of the sewer system in relation to the amount of actual sewer discharge created by any particular building. Section 64.41.11 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code clearly outlines the intent of this methodology by stating that it is "to ensure that each user will pay his proportionate share of the costs of waste treatment services."

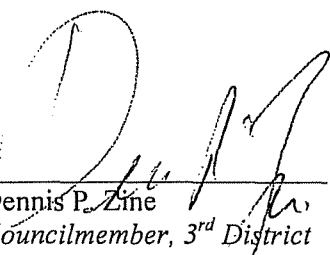
It is unclear, however, whether the current SSC calculation method charges all users of the system equitably. In the case of residences where there is only one water meter, there is no completely precise way to measure sewer discharge. The SSC attempts to estimate this discharge amount by measuring the total amount of water used by a residence, then subtracting what is known as "winter water use." This estimate is based on the assumption that "winter water use" is a baseline water use amount that does not include large amounts of water used for landscaping.

In order to reach a more precise SSC calculation that is not misrepresented by water used for landscaping and other uses that do not empty into the sewer system, homeowners are currently authorized to purchase and install separate sewage discharge meters. These meters generally cost several hundred dollars and are an unfair burden to City residents. The Bureau of Sanitation's own policy, which allows for the installation of separate sewage discharge meters, seems to suggest that the current SSC calculation method may be flawed.

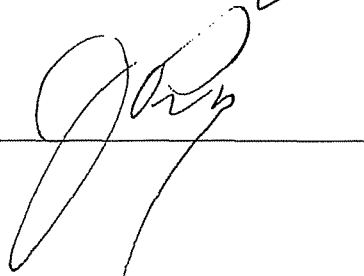
All fees and charges assessed by the City of Los Angeles should be as fair and equitable as possible. Because the SSC is based largely on estimates of water usage rather than exact measurements of sewer system discharge, there may be flaws in the calculation method that merit further attention.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Bureau of Sanitation be instructed to report to the Energy and the Environment Committee with an analysis of the Sewer Service Charge calculation method, including how the charge is calculated for buildings that lack a separate sewer effluent meter, how many users have installed such meters and have requested recalculations of the SSC, and whether certain types of residences are charged more on a per-occupant basis than others due to this method.

PRESENTED BY: _____


Dennis P. Zine
Councilmember, 3rd District

SECONDED BY: _____



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Refer To 98-0095-S1