

NEWS CLIPS

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Resource Conservation and Public Outreach

Organized by date

A behind-the-scenes battle to divert L.A.'s storm water from going to waste

Source: LA Times 3/11/16



The storm had gathered power for days as it crossed the Northern Pacific, and now its outer band was uppercutting the coast.

By the time Eric Batman arrived at work at 7 Monday morning, a hard west wind was driving rain and hail sideways /against windows. Thunder reverberated across the L.A. Basin.

Batman reveled in El Niño's long-overdue rumbling.

His job, as senior civil engineer for the county Department of Public Works, is to keep as much rain as possible from escaping to the ocean.

He wished this storm would slow down a bit. Let the mountains wring more of that water out. Make it more of a challenge.

Even at its current clip, the clouds would drop hundreds of millions of gallons on Southern California, and he needed to make sure the system was ready.

On the second floor of the department's headquarters in Alhambra, he checked in with the "storm boss," the on-duty engineer in charge of monitoring flow rates throughout the 3,300-mile network of storm drains, channels, debris basins, dams, spreading grounds — everything humans have built over the last century to control the water racing from the high San Gabriels to the sea.

"Where are we open?" Batman asked. "How much are we taking in?"

The storm boss told Batman that he had inflated one of the seven rubber dams along the lower San Gabriel River.

This move would divert the flow into a spreading ground in Pico Rivera — 90 acres of porous soil that can suck up 75 cubic feet of water every second to be stored in the aquifer below.

But the water wasn't there yet. The San Gabriel takes its time.

With age, the county's two big rivers — sisters born of the same weather systems and topography — have grown distinct in appearance and temperament.

The L.A. River is a fast and moody Type A, and it's had a lot of work done.

The San Gabriel is more natural and leisurely paced.

Both rivers and their tributaries cascade from above 7,000 feet to the Pacific Ocean in less than 60 miles and are historically prone to major flooding during wet years.

After floods in 1938 killed 87 people, the Army Corps of Engineers and the L.A. County Flood Control District rapidly sped up the push to build dams and channelize the rivers. Because development had already hemmed in the L.A. River, it had to be encased in concrete to keep it in line, and it became rainwater's 51-mile drag strip to Long Beach.

The concrete made the river safer, but for many — especially during the rare storms that grace a long drought — the sight of the Los Angeles River at full throttle became a disheartening ritual of squandered opportunity.

The 58-mile San Gabriel River, on the other hand, had more open space around it, giving water engineers more room to divert its flow to adjacent spreading grounds. Only the last 10 miles of its bottom is paved. For most of its run to the Pacific, it flows over rock and sand.

So by 9:30 a.m. Monday, while the L.A. River's water was already roaring to the sea at more than 7,200 cubic feet every second, the San Gabriel's was meandering down the riverbed and into spreading grounds far upstream, percolating as nature intended.

Legendary aquifers

The aquifers of Los Angeles County, fed by the rain and mountain runoff for eons, were once legendary. The water table was so brimming that water gushed out of springs and from wells without needing to be pumped. In 1904, some 1,700 of these artesian wells dotted the L.A. Basin.

But as the population rapidly expanded, residents began drawing more groundwater than was going in, and streets, highways, factories, parking lots and homes made more and more of the county impervious to infiltration.

In the 1930s, the County Flood Control District began acquiring land adjacent to the rivers and creeks to use as spreading grounds.

The region's fractured geology made that tricky. The porous alluvial soils and rock that have flowed out of the steep, highly erosive mountains for the last 5 million years or so have made the valleys good areas to recharge the aquifer.

But the marine sediment of the coastal areas had a hard top layer of clay, which — as any gardener can attest — drains poorly.

"The farther you get from the mountains, the finer material you get," Batman said. "The bigger stuff drops away."

So there was limited opportunity to catch the urban runoff in the lower San Fernando Valley and the L.A. Basin.

One exception: the Montebello Forebay, an area where the coarse alluvial sediment extended into the basin along the San Gabriel and Rio Hondo.

Today, drivers heading south out of Commerce on the I-5 may wonder what that dusty meadow is doing amid so much industry. Answer: It's some of the 700 acres of forebay that the county acquired in the late 1930s as spreading grounds.

Most of the other 25 spreading grounds are far upstream, near the mountains.

Partly because of this, an estimated 163 billion gallons of water a year — including much that falls from the sky over the flatlands — slips to the sea, enough to fill a large swimming pool for every household in the county.

Only 65 billion gallons is captured and stored in the aquifers.

Permeable roads

A years-long study by the county and the Bureau of Reclamation, published in January, looked at ways to ramp up that number. Most of the opportunities lie in keeping the rainwater out of the flood control system and trapping it where it lands.

The authors recommended permeable roads and parking lots, more swales, cisterns and rain barrels.

One project they point to is a park in Sun Valley. In 2006, engineers installed two infiltration basins — vertical layers of concrete and gravel — under the soccer and baseball fields. A storm drain along Cantara Street now empties underground into the basin, and the water seeps into the aquifer below. County officials estimate it captures about 10 million gallons a year.

Depending on what new measures are taken, officials say they might trap as many as 50 billion more gallons across the county.

"These types of projects are critical for our communities to become climate-resilient," said Deborah Bloome, senior director of policy for TreePeople, a group that advocates for planting trees and harvesting more rain, in part to water them.

The TreePeople campus in Coldwater Canyon has a parking lot that is graded so the rain flows into a cistern that holds 216,000 gallons.

"With the impacts of climate change already being felt, the snowpack being diminished, we need to be capturing more of our water locally," Bloome said.

Finally, seepage

At 11 a.m., on the south side of Whittier Boulevard in Pico Rivera, across from A Mi Hacienda Restaurant and Nightclub and the Steak 'N Stein Inn, the early morning rains off the Pacific are finally seeping into the earth.

The thick rubber dam has diverted the river into the San Gabriel Coastal Spreading Grounds.

This open space was first used to trap water after the deadly floods of 1938.

By that year, the water table had dropped in places from about 10 feet to 20 feet below ground level at the turn of the century to more than 80 feet below the ground. The geysers of water were long gone.

Officials estimate that around 1960, the aquifers in the Los Angeles Basin reached a low point of about 250 feet deep, or 100 feet below sea level. This allowed seawater to start encroaching.

Since then, Public Works and the Water Replenishment District have been diverting treated wastewater and imported water into the spreading grounds, using its storm channels as plumbing. The water table has risen 80 feet.

Just days before Monday's storm, Batman sent a delivery of Northern California water down the pipes to the spreading grounds in Pico Rivera.

That was a rare event. Winters are usually reserved for water from the sky.

On Monday, after the storm had passed, billowing white clouds still touched the mountains and the engineers were still watching their system capture water.

First it sluiced through a de-silting basin, a maze of earthen channels that slow the current and allow silt to settle on the bottom.

Then the water flowed into the next two basins, now with less silt to clog the percolation process.

With no water getting past that rubber dam, this is where the river effectively ended that day, as if in some endorheic lake in the desert.

Downstream, the San Gabriel river was a green meadow with scattered willows and ponds.

If the storm had been bigger, the department could have inflated up to seven rubber dams, turning seven miles of the river itself into a spreading ground.

So far, this much anticipated El Niño has not come close to offering that kind of replenishment.

By the end of the day Monday, Public Works had captured 802 million gallons from the storm, enough water for 19,680 people for one year.

The San Gabriel Coastal Spreading Grounds took in 217 million gallons of that.

It was a modest storm, with a modest catch, not a bad day of fishing for water.

Source: The Acorn 3/10/16

**Triunfo Sanitation District is Hosting A
FREE Graywater Workshop**

**Saturday, March 19, 2016
10:30am-12:30pm**

Learn how to convert wastewater from your clothes washer to a simple irrigation system.

**Oak Park Community Center
1000 N. Kanan Road**



Contact Lisa McKinley at
805-658-4618 or
lisamckinley@vrzd.com to register

10A231

Source: The Acorn 3/10/16

Garden Smarter

It's easy with FREE Garden Classes for LVMWD customers

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*Wednesday, April 6, 2016
6 to 8 p.m.*

Get ready to plant your most productive and water thrifty vegetable garden ever! Join us as Christy Wilhelmi, aka the "Gardenerd" and author of "Gardening for Geeks", shares how she grows most of her family's produce in her tiny 200 square foot garden year after year, using biointensive methods, compost and heirloom vegetable varieties.

How to Register

Register online at www.LVMWD.com/Garden-Classes.

Due to the high demand for these classes, preference is given to LVMWD customers; *walk-ins will not be admitted*.

Problems registering online? Call 818-251-2100 during business hours.

A complimentary light meal will be provided at each class.



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Open to customers of Las Virgenes Municipal Water District and Triunfo Sanitation District/Oak Park Water




www.LVMWD.com
www.TriunfoSanitation.com
Las Virgenes - Triunfo Joint Powers Authority



10A431


Source: The Acorn 3/10/16




Save
Our
WATER
SaveOurH2O.org

Change
YOUR
Clocks

Check
YOUR
Sprinklers



It's that time of the year again - time to spring forward. Sunday, March 13 is the official start of daylight saving time. We can save significant amounts of water by using the time change as a reminder to check our sprinkler system for leaks, to reset timers and change the backup battery. And check www.LVMWD.com/MyWaterBudget for details on your March water budget.



LAS VIRGENES
MUNICIPAL
WATER DISTRICT

10A461

Source: Ventura County Star 3/10/16

Just move

Re: your story March 6, "Higher rents":

This article speaks to the lack of rental units in Ventura County. The article mentions millennials moving out of their parents' homes and not being able to find rental housing and/or being able to afford the purchase of a home. A new, 173-unit apartment complex is being built in east Ventura, and more should be built to fill this urgent need.

Am I missing something here? There is a drought going on. Not a water shortage, a full-on drought. If people can't find rentals or can't afford to buy an existing home, move. Building anything that would increase water usage is wrong. Where is the mystery?

Tom Bryant,
Ventura

MWD votes to buy 20,000 acres of island farmland in Sacramento-San Joaquin delta

Source: LA Times 3/9/16



The board of Southern California's water importer voted Tuesday to buy 20,000 acres of farm islands in the heart of the state's north-south plumbing system.

The land is owned by a private company that for years has tried to develop a water storage project on the property. But the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California says it has other plans for the four islands in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, which is east of San Francisco.

District officials said the acreage could be converted to fish and wildlife habitat or used to store materials for emergency levee repairs or to provide access for the construction of a delta tunnel system.

"We hope to execute a purchase agreement shortly," said Jeffrey Kightlinger, Metropolitan's general manager. He did not disclose the price but indicated it was in the range of \$200 million.

The board voted last fall to negotiate an option to purchase Bacon and Bouldin islands, Webb and Holland tracts and a portion of Chipps Island from Delta Wetlands Properties, which is owned by a subsidiary of a Swiss insurance company, Zurich Insurance Group.

But the staff concluded the option process involved too many complications and instead asked the board to authorize a direct purchase. The board approved the buy on a 54%-41% vote, with representatives of Los Angeles, Santa Monica and the San Diego County Water Authority voting no.

To close the deal, which will have a 60-day escrow, Kightlinger said, Delta Wetlands Properties has to clear from the title various agreements it made in connection with the water storage proposal.

Landowners on neighboring islands objected to the reservoir project, saying it could weaken their levees and endanger farming operations. To settle the challenges, the company agreed to various safeguards that MWD says are no longer necessary, given the district's plans.

The \$15-billion tunnel system, backed by Metropolitan and big irrigation districts in the San Joaquin Valley, would carry Sacramento River water under the delta to the pumping operations that send supplies south.

Two of the islands are in the path of the tunnels, so MWD ownership would eliminate the need for eminent domain proceedings and provide easy access for construction crews on part of the project route.

Although the islands have water rights, Kightlinger has said they are not significant.

The tunnels are fiercely opposed by delta farmers. In a statement, the anti-tunnel group Restore the Delta called MWD ownership of a chunk of the delta "an existential threat."

Beachfront homes in Oxnard likely spared flooded streets due to pumps installed before storm

Source: LA Times 3/8/16



Million-dollar beachfront homes in the Oxnard Shores neighborhood were likely spared flooded conditions Monday due to a rented pump system installed late last week, Oxnard officials say.

On Friday, the city put in three rented storm drain pumps on Mandalay Beach Road, southwest of Harbor Boulevard and Fifth Street.

Pete Martinez, the city's wastewater collection supervisor, said Monday the area is prone to flooding when a trio of conditions coalesce as they did over the weekend: heavy rain, big surf and high tide. The city's storm drains rely on gravity and don't function well when seawater surges.

"This was a perfect storm of all three variables," Martinez said.

Without the rented system in place, he said, "I would have had three feet of flooding at Mandalay Beach Road and Outrigger (Way)."

Instead, discharge pipes jutting from the rectangular metal station there snaked between narrowly spaced homes and across the sand, where they spit a steady stream into the ocean Monday morning as heavy waves pounded the shore.

The City Council last week approved \$82,200 to rent the three pump stations, which include the discharge pipes, for four months.

Thien Ng, interim wastewater division manager, said the temporary stations are also providing data for a future permanent fix. While such a system is likely at least a year or two away - permanent projects on the coast are complicated by state regulations - the pumps could be rented again if there's another season with heavy rains.

In normal rain years, the city's own pumps can do the job, Ng said.

Source: Ventura County Star 3/7/16

Change is manmade

Re: Alan Munson's March 5 letter, "Climate change":

I don't know where Mr. Munson gets his information about climate change, but his letter is what's false and misleading.

It's not 98 percent of all scientists who believe global warming is real and likely caused by human activity, it is 98 percent of actively publishing climate scientists — in other words, scientists who know about climate. Other scientists may have opinions, but their opinions are no more meaningful than any of the rest of us.

The scientific consensus about manmade climate change is clearly documented on NASA's website at: <http://climate.nasa.gov/scientific-consensus>.

When scientists say "likely," they don't mean "possibly." They mean "supported by overwhelming physical evidence."

Matty Park, Ventura

Source: Ventura County Star 3/7/16

[Letters to the Editor](#)

Save water

I think that despite all these upcoming rains, we should still be concerned about the drought. I think people will get lax and waste too much water in the bliss of the rainy season with El Nino.

I'm 12 and I'm a concerned person about the drought. My family already has removed and replaced their lawn, and I try to turn off the water in the shower. I also try to turn off the water when I'm brushing my teeth.

I say we should buckle down and keep on saving water even in the rainy season.

Drew Swanson Hollinger, Ventura

Flint water crisis has hurt thousands, residents' lawsuit claims

Source: LA Times 3/7/16



A lawsuit stemming from Flint's lead-contaminated water was filed Monday on behalf of the city's residents against Michigan Gov. [Rick Snyder](#) and other current and former government officials and corporations.

The federal lawsuit -- which is seeking class-action status -- alleges that tens of thousands of residents have suffered physical and economic injuries and damages. It contends that officials failed to take action to deal with "dangerous levels of lead" in drinking water and "downplayed the severity of the contamination" in the financially struggling city.

Snyder's spokesman, Ari Adler, said the administration doesn't comment on pending litigation, but is "staying focused on solutions for the people of Flint."

Numerous lawsuits have been filed on behalf of Flint residents since a public health emergency was declared last year. The latest lawsuit, which seeks a jury trial and unspecified damages, was filed on behalf of seven residents.

Flint, with a population of about 100,000, had switched from Detroit's water system to the Flint River as a way to save money until a new pipeline to Lake Huron was ready. But during those 18 months, the corrosive water leached lead from the city's old plumbing because certain treatments weren't added to the water.

Snyder, whose administration repeatedly downplayed the lead threat, now calls it a "disaster."

A report by the state auditor general released Friday found that state environmental regulators made crucial errors as Flint began using the new drinking water source that would become contaminated with lead. It says staffers in the Department of Environmental Quality's drinking

water office failed to order the city to treat its water with anti-corrosion chemicals as it switched to the river in April 2014, but also said the rules they failed to heed may not be strong enough to protect the public.

The report came as crews in the city started to dig up old pipes connecting water mains to homes.

No level of lead in the human body is considered safe, especially in children. The river water also may have been a source of Legionnaires' disease, which killed at least nine people in the region.

Flint Mayor Karen Weaver announced Sunday that Union Labor Life Insurance Co. committed to \$25 million in low-cost loans to help remove lead pipes and improve water quality. She said the loans will help her Fast Start initiative that's designed to replace all lead service lines in the city.

L.A. Mayor Garcetti gives advice on El Niño -- from LACMA's 'Rain Room' -- in new video

Source: LA Times 3/7/16

With a new El Niño storm bringing rain to Southern California, Los Angeles Mayor [Eric Garcetti](#) has posted [a public service announcement](#) -- from the [Los Angeles County Museum of Art's](#) "Rain Room."

Garcetti picked the ironic venue to talk about rain safety and point residents to the [city's El Niño Web page](#).

The storm hit Monday morning commuters hard with rain, thunder and lightning Monday.

Drivers were startled early Monday by the rumble of thunder, frequent lightning flashes and hail.

The storm system is expected to bring half an inch to an inch of rain, with the steadiest rain coming early in the day as the cold front moves through the region. Behind the cold front, rainfall will become "more showery," with thunderstorms possible throughout the afternoon and evening, [the weather service said](#).

Thunderstorms will be capable of producing debris flows near burn areas. Forecasters issued a flash flood warning early Monday for the Solimar burn area in western Ventura County.

The storm brought pea-sized hail to much of the Southland, covering the ground in areas near Sierra Madre and Altadena, said Stuart Seto, a weather specialist with the [National Weather Service](#) in Oxnard. In areas experiencing thunderstorms, lightning is possible throughout the evening, he said.

The system also brought strong winds, with reports of gusts up to 64 mph near Point Mugu in the Santa Monica Mountains and gusts over 50 mph in other mountain areas, Seto said.

This is not the first time Garcetti took to personal videos to communicate with the city. When demolition of the 6th Street Bridge caused the 101 Freeway to be closed, Garcetti [performed a slow jam to mark](#) the event.

Sewage plants are failing to kill lethal superbugs unleashed from hospitals

Source: LA Times 3/7/16



Every day Southern California hospitals unleash millions of gallons of raw sewage into municipal sewers.

The malodorous muck flows miles to one of the region's sewage plants, where it is treated with the rest of the area's waste and then released as clear water into a stream or directly to the Pacific.

Scientists at the [Environmental Protection Agency](#) recently announced they had discovered a lethal superbug — the same one that caused outbreaks at [UCLA](#) and two other Los Angeles-area hospitals — in sewage at one of those plants. They declined to name the facility.

EPA scientists did not test treated wastewater flowing out of the plant to determine whether it still contained [CRE](#), or carbapenem-resistant enterobacteriaceae.

But a growing number of studies show sewage plants can't kill the superbugs. Instead the facilities serve as "a luxury hotel" for drug-resistant bacteria, a place where they thrive and grow stronger, said Pedro Alvarez, a professor of environmental engineering at [Rice University](#), one of the scientists studying the problem.

Alvarez and other researchers say the failure of sewage plants to eliminate the dangerous bacteria is one way they may be spreading from hospitals to the environment.

"Chlorine is just not doing it," Alvarez said of the treatment used by most plants.

The fear is that healthy people otherwise not at risk from the bacteria — including swimmers at the beach — could be infected.

Already officials are worried about the surprising number of people sickened with CRE who have not recently visited a medical facility: 8%, according to an October study.

Hospitals are not breaking laws by releasing the sewage. Laws regulate the overall level of disease-causing bacteria in the nation's surface waters, but there is no specific regulation of bacteria resistant to antibiotics.

Deemed the "nightmare bacteria" by federal officials, CRE survives nearly all antibiotics. It kills as many as half its victims.

Government officials, including those at the federal [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), say they are monitoring the wastewater studies but have so far made no recommendations to hospitals about the treatment of sewage that may harbor CRE.

"The prevention and control of CRE is an evolving process," said Melissa Brower, an agency spokeswoman. "CDC will continue to assess the appropriateness of this as new information becomes available."

Researchers have tried for years to raise the alarm about hospital sewage. The sludge includes not just waste from patients suffering from drug-resistant infections but also high levels of antibiotics prescribed to treat them.

As the sewage mixes, the antibiotics kill off weaker bacteria, leaving the more lethal ones to thrive. The bugs reproduce rapidly, and different species can swap genes, transferring their ability to withstand the drugs.

Last year, the nation's treatment plants were alerted to the risks of untreated medical sewage when a few American hospitals began caring for patients who had been struck by Ebola in Africa.

The CDC directed hospitals to allow the Ebola patients to use the toilets in their rooms, but said sewer workers should wear protective clothing, including goggles and a face mask, to protect themselves from the highly contagious virus.

Concern about that case prompted a foundation supported by water utilities to study what contaminants, including bacteria, hospitals are releasing in sewage.

"The idea of CRE flowing down our sewer pipes gets me nervous," said Dr. James McKinnell, an infectious disease expert at the Los Angeles Biomedical Research Institute, who has been working to stop superbugs from spreading. "We should be testing our runoff."

Inside hospitals, staff go on high alert when a patient tests positive for CRE.

Infected patients are isolated. Nurses don protective gowns and gloves. Family and friends are warned about visiting.

So far at least 75 of the 100 hospitals in Los Angeles, Orange and Ventura counties have reported patients infected with CRE. Los Angeles has the state's highest rate.

CRE thrives in water. Hospitals have found it living in sink drains. The bacteria are happy in patients' intestines and it passes through in urine and waste.

Every day, 2 million gallons of raw sewage from Los Angeles hospitals flows to the city's Hyperion treatment facility.

The Disneyland-sized complex of pipes, giant tanks and pools sits at the edge of the Pacific, near Los Angeles International Airport.

Like other plants, Hyperion intentionally creates an ideal environment for microorganisms to thrive. The plant mixes non-disease-causing bacteria into the sewage and pumps in oxygen, allowing the bugs to feed and break down the waste.

The solids are settled out, and the clear water is piped five miles offshore and released 190 feet below the waves. It is treated with chlorine only in rare cases when it is released a mile offshore.

Hyperion employees test the treated water for levels of bacteria, but do not hunt for those that resist antibiotics like CRE.

Timeyin Dafeta, Hyperion's manager, said that if CRE was present it "would be in extremely low concentrations" because hospital sewage accounts for just 0.5% of the city's wastewater.

"We have no indication the effluent is coming back to impact the shoreline," Dafeta said.

Farther south, dozens of other sewage plants release treated wastewater into creeks and concrete channels that eventually flow into the Pacific.

Some surf spots — like the Santa Ana River jetties in Orange County — have become known as places with great waves that can make you sick.

"Just check yourself for cuts prior to entering," the surfing magazine *Stab* recently warned about the site on the northern border of Newport Beach. "Oh, and keep your mouth shut."

California officials don't know what bacteria is in the seawater. They monitor the ocean water for what they call fecal indicator bacteria — a sign of raw sewage. But they rarely test for specific bacteria, including those that are drug-resistant.

A 2010 study estimated that 689,000 to 4 million people are struck by gastrointestinal illnesses caught from Southern California beaches each year. An additional 693,000 are sickened with respiratory problems.

In December 2014, Barry Ault died on Christmas morning a few days after surfing off Sunset Cliffs in San Diego. A staph infection attacked the 71-year-old's heart valve, which had been replaced 10 months before.

Ault's friend also got seriously ill. The two went surfing just after a rainstorm when it's not possible for sewage treatment plants to handle all the runoff.

Sally Ault, Barry's wife, said that the two were surfing in an area known for not being polluted. She said her husband, who grew up in Arcadia, had fully recovered from the earlier heart operation and was in great shape.

"It was nothing other than the bacteria," she said.

It's difficult to find which regulatory agency is responsible for monitoring what hospitals release to the sewers.

The state public health department referred questions to State Water Resources Control Board officials. That agency referred questions to county officials, who said they had made no recommendations to hospitals to pre-treat sewage from CRE patients.

Enrique Rivero, a spokesman for UCLA, where three patients died after being infected by CRE from a contaminated medical scope, said that no one was available to comment.

A spokesman at Cedars-Sinai, site of a similar scope-linked outbreak, said the hospital follows all regulations relating to the handling of patient waste.

Cathy Milbourn at the EPA said agency scientists believe there is "insufficient information available to reach a definite conclusion on the presence and fate" of drug-resistant bacteria in sewage plants.

Last fall, a team of EPA scientists reported that they had found CRE in sewage at treatment plants across the country — including one in Southern California and another in the northern part of the state.

"I tested seven different plants and I found it in all of them," said Jill Hoelle, a scientist in the EPA's office of research and development.

The scientists concluded that CRE is "widespread" in America's sewage — a finding that Hoelle said she found surprising given that reported patient infections are still relatively rare.

Alvarez, the Rice professor, said that with the rise of ever more dangerous bacteria like CRE, there is a risk of returning to a time, before the invention of water treatment, when infectious diseases were a major cause of death.

"We can save more lives by treating water than doctors can," he said.

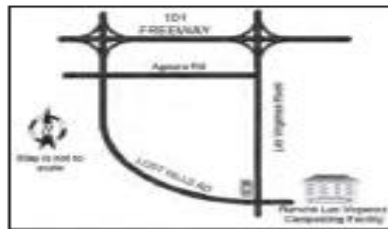
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For more information, visit www.LVMWD.com/community-compost.



VICA Supports DWP Increases

The Valley Industry and Commerce Association (VICA) board voted to support the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power's (LADWP) water and power rate increases that were tentatively approved by the Los Angeles City Council Wednesday, VICA President Stuart Waldman said Monday.

VICA recently took a position in favor of the modest, gradual rate increases for residential and commercial customers to address a series of serious challenges to the L.A.'s water and power infrastructure, Waldman said.

"The rate increases are intended to help repair failing pipelines and power lines in need of repair throughout the city of Los Angeles," Waldman said. "Damaged pipelines and power lines pose a significant safety concern for residents and businesses, potentially interrupting services."

Unfortunately, the need for infrastructure repair comes as residents are being asked to cut down drastically on their water usage, Waldman said, which is putting a serious strain on the utility's operating budget.

"L.A. residents have really stepped up, played their part and reduced their water usage for the drought," Waldman said. "However, that effort has turned into significantly

less revenue for LADWP officials, who are in the midst of a major campaign to upgrade infrastructure across the city.

These challenges are being compounded by recent onerous, statewide energy mandates that are pushing operating costs for the utility even higher. Senate Bill 350 requires utility providers to generate 50 percent of their power from renewable sources

they are in perfect working order, will have to be abandoned for renewable-energy facilities – a costly action resulting from these recent mandates.

"While a big part of the need is infrastructure improvements, ultimately, California's nation-leading efficiency standards are part of the cost, as well," Waldman said, urging voters to be mindful of the potential price tag for nation-

"Reduced water usage for the drought... has turned into significantly less revenue for LADWP officials..."

- Stuart Waldman

and double the state's energy efficiencies by 50 percent by 2030

The total cost of these energy mandates is still unknown, but the anticipated cost was part of the determination in the need for a rate increase. Some current facilities, despite the fact that

leading standards when future energy mandates are discussed.

The mission of VICA is to enhance the economic vitality of the greater San Fernando Valley by advocating for a better business climate and quality of life. Visit vica.com for more information.

Englander Releases Statement Opposing DWP Rate Increase

The following is a statement released by Councilman Mitch Englander expressing his opposition to the DWP rate increase.

Because of the events surrounding the Aliso Canyon Gas Leak and its effect on the residents and businesses in my district, I know all too well what can happen when vital infrastructure

is allowed to age to the point where it fails. Infrastructure cannot be neglected. It requires constant investment and updating. Governance of a municipal utility is also essential infrastructure and DWP's is every bit as outdated as its pipes, transformers and transmission systems. It requires a dramatic overhaul.

(Continued next page)

Councilman Opposes DWP Rate Increase

(Continued from previous page)

Transparency and Customer Service are also essential cornerstones for a modern municipal utility. Unfortunately, the DWP doesn't have a great track record with either of these. The recent billing scandal and subsequent settlement of a ratepayer lawsuit are obvious, recent examples. It highlights

a DWP culture that is so deeply mired in bureaucracy that it took over a year to resolve problems related to that debacle – including the ability to simply hire enough customer service professionals to meet the need.

I cannot support a rate increase that essentially allows the City to delay governance, transparency and customer service reform.

Asking the ratepayers to pay more while waiting for reform that may never come is just putting the cart before the horse. Reform the governance. Improve the transparency. Provide improved customer service. This is the three-pronged formula for a successful rate increase strategy that I can support.

-Councilmember Mitchell Englander