



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 6, 2014

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Paving the Way for LA to Become a Biotech Leader

In a move that positions Los Angeles as a leader in the burgeoning biotechnology industry, the Board of Supervisors voted to move forward with the Los Angeles County Biotech Master Plan and to identify biotech opportunities at all five Los Angeles County medical campuses, including Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, Olive View Medical Center and Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center.

The motion approved Tuesday comes on the heels of a 2014 report from the Battelle Memorial Institute which sought to advance the bioscience industry in Los Angeles County. The motion, authored by Supervisors Mark Ridley-Thomas and Don Knabe, calls for the creation of a bioscience working group comprised of public and private bioscience experts including representatives from the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services medical center campuses, Workforce Investment Board, local academic institutions, and other key biotech and business stakeholders, such as LA BioMed, SoCal Bio, and the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation.

From 2001 to 2010, the biosciences industry in Los Angeles County grew nearly 12 percent, outpacing the national bioscience industry by 6 percent. However, despite the presence of a strong base of research and innovation businesses, the county is losing talent to other thriving biotech job markets due to the lack of venture capital investment and a limited real estate market for commercial lab space.

Modern biotechnology is a growing field of science developing products and technologies to combat rare diseases, improve the environment, reduce world hunger and establish a cleaner energy footprint.

“It is critical that we invest in our future by creating a biomed hub in Los Angeles County,” said Supervisor Ridley-Thomas. “We are an intellectually and creatively rich region and we need to make sure we are maximizing our talents.”

Several experts, and the first ever partial leg transplant patient, spoke at the board meeting Tuesday in support of the motion.

“It is because of the kind of scientific innovation that is being done around that world that I am able to walk,” said Denise DeMan, who is also the CEO of Bench International one of the nation’s top life science, pharmaceutical & healthcare recruiters. “I was only going to be in a wheelchair but when you see me walk away today, you’ll see me walking in 5-inch heels. That’s the kind of innovation that we also have here in the United States—especially in L.A. County. But we are not exercising it to its fullest and we need your support. Thank you.”

David Galaviz, executive director of local government relations for the University of Southern California, testified that the county could now begin to look at the potential of a biotech industry in a comprehensive way.

“This motion is important not only to the county but to all other biotech stakeholders including the university and other regional academic institutions and businesses because it forces everyone to begin looking at biotech from a broader regional perspective and one of increased cooperation and communication,” he said.

The board is expecting a report back by February on the selection of a consultant, establishment of an advisory group, work plan and timeline for delivery of the implementation plan.

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