

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

March 3, 2015

Improving Accountability and Oversight of Water Quality in the City of Gardena

In January of this year, residents in the City of Gardena began to complain about the appearance and odor of the water piped into their homes and the lack of responsiveness from the water carrier to their complaints.

The City of Gardena receives water service from Golden State Water Company (GSWC). Los Angeles County recognizes the authority of the California Environmental Protection Agency's State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water and the California Public Utilities Commission to regulate GSWC and has no direct responsibility or authority to regulate the quality of water from GSWC.

At the request of the State Water Resources Board's Division of Drinking Water, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) conducted an investigation, and learned that the blackened water was principally caused by sediment and bio-film coming from the water mains as a result of years of water treatment and less frequent flushing. GSWC did not pre-notify customers of its remediation activities which included flushing and main line replacement. Multiple requests for flushing schedules by DPH were also denied.

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MOTION

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I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS send a five-signature letter to the California Environmental Protection Agency's Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water asking that they immediately send a letter to Golden State Water Company to:

1. Revise its notification procedures to promptly pre-notify customers of any flushing, piping or any other remediation activities that may affect water quality or cause any inconvenience to residents. Notification should be conducted through postcards, door advertisements, letters, robocalls and web postings;
2. Fully and promptly cooperate with directives and recommendations issued by State of California and County of Los Angeles authorities;
3. Provide information to customers on how they can file complaints to the State of California regulatory agencies for tracking and follow-up;
4. Issue a written report on any and all remediation actions taken to improve water quality in the City of Gardena and to post this written report in a manner that can be easily publicly viewed; and
5. Promptly and regularly request a laboratory analysis of water samples to ensure no contaminants are present and concentrations are appropriate, to take appropriate actions based on any laboratory findings and to make those findings easily publicly available.

I FURTHER MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS direct the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Interim Director of the Department of Public Health and County Counsel, to report back in writing in 60 days on recommended proposed legislative or regulatory changes that would give the County of Los Angeles and localities some level of funded oversight.