



Meeting Report for April 20,2009 Meeting  
By  
Denny Schneider

## Tom Erb -DWP Water Conservation Plans

**Valley VOTE** Board members, community leaders, and concerned citizens convened on April 20, 2009 to hear featured speaker Thomas Erb the Director of Water Resources for the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. The reduced water supply outlook for 2009 will present great challenges for the DWP and the citizens of L.A. Tom Erb explained the causes of concern and identified proposed DWP strategies to deal with these serious issues.

Tom Erb heads the DWP team dedicated to improving our water supply and to anticipate water supply issues and their solutions. He started his account of our restricted water sources with a graphic showing the two major water aqueducts from northern California and the one from the Colorado River. Under normal conditions, he explained, we obtain over half of our water from the Metropolitan Water District. ( 88% of LA water is imported). As drought conditions continue, greater and greater amounts are brought to LA by MWD. The snow pack in the mountains has been short each of the last three years and the State has declared a water emergency.

Environmental concerns continue to reduce the second largest water source, the LA aqueduct supplies. Further, contamination of local groundwater continues to reduce the local water supplies.

LA citizens already conserve water resources. Despite the substantial population increase of over a million people since 1990 we continue to consume approximately the same amount of water today. Unfortunately we will experience increased regulations and restrictions on our supplies. Increased demand must be met by improved conservation and more efficient water use. DWP is looking for both short term measures and long term planning with capital improvements to address the problems. Stormwater capture must be improved. More recycled gray water usage, increased replenishment into groundwater collection basins and increased water storage is mandatory. A long term goal is to improve water recycling from 1% to 6%. Orange County is already making recycled water that is safe to drink.

Mr. Erb identified several integrated strategies to conserve 50,000 (Acre Feet per year) AFY and improve water reuse by 2030. Total L.A. water use currently is about 650,000 AFY. He called for conservation incentives, better City use, and heightened public awareness of the issues. Facilities will need major improvements for advance water treatment and collection, plus more recycled water distribution capacity. This also includes major recharge of our spreading grounds to allow the earth to naturally filter water.

He also proposes working closely with EPA to reduce pollution of local wells in the effort to increase locally available water. 40% of the wells are closed, but that number could be improved. Expanded groundwater storage in Central and West Coast basins along with Antelope Valley facilities will also be needed.

Finally more efficient water use by plumbing and drought tolerant landscaping will also be beneficial. He wants to see use of cisterns, porous pavement, etc., to allow water to soak back into the groundwater. The LA River Master Plan includes strategy to capture more water upstream. Green Building practices are also critical. Other ideas being addressed is better outreach and to allow the public to better monitor their water use. The bottom line is that **everyone must participate** in water conservation and we will have to spend infrastructure money to improve our retention and processing of water for reuse.

---

**Valley VOTE** Committee Reports are summarized below. Each committee provides more detailed reports to meeting attendees.

### Housing—Vic Viereck

The housing density bonuses of up to 35% above existing zoning that was approved last year in response to SB1818 were challenged in Superior Court and rejected. The basis for nullifying the LA density bonus law exceeded the mandate with environmental concerns such as traffic impacts, etc., not being taken into

consideration by the broadly written law. A more narrowly defined law that parrots SB1818 was recommended. Further, the Daily News blames the law for a net loss of affordable units because older, lower cost rental units were replaced by increased numbers of market rate new ones.

#### **Land Use—Pauline Tallent**

The Sepulveda VA facility lease to New Directions/Community of Friends for homeless housing was reported to be still under advisement. Several local Neighborhood Councils oppose the new use of these formerly medical facilities.

#### **Neighborhood Councils—George Truesdell**

Neighborhood Councils are involved in many issues. Measure B –solar showed that NCs can organize and have a real impact. NCs have also been supporting things like special purchase items for police, etc. There is a Valley Regional Conference coming soon. DONE will contribute \$12.5K. and is asking NCs to kick in about \$1500 ea. Previously these events were paid for entirely by DONE.

#### **LAWA—Denny Schneider**

The airline industry remains in severe distress and the money to fix LAX is constrained. Much maintenance has been deferred for years so that many costly repair projects are required. The push to expand has not gone away; LAWA is seeking approvals in the near term for long term construction. Meanwhile, the FAA is touting its new efforts to develop NextGen tracking which will allow closer spacing of aircraft during flights and more direct routing. It won't fix the spacing requirements between landing and departing aircraft.

#### **Van Nuys “Part 161” Study Update—Don Schultz**

Mr. Schultz is the VP of the VNY Citizens Advisory Council which opposes the Bob Hope Burbank Part 161 which would close Bob Hope to all night flights and move 16 daily flights and 16 nightly flights to VNY. The Airport Noise and Capacity Act of 1990 prohibits airports from limiting take offs or landings (unless for safety) without FAA approval. A “Part 161” is a formal request to the FAA for a change in flight operations. It requires extensive study and to date only one small airport in Florida has ever been granted any approval. A separate “Part 161” to reduce operations and limit the types of aircraft at VNY is 1 yr behind the Bob Hope request. Mayor Villaraigosa opposes the Bob Hope Part 161 as does Valley VOTE. LAWA also wrote a strong opposition letter. The FAA is still studying Bob Hope Airport's request and sent a 14 page list of concerns to them.

#### **Membership—Richard Leyner**

Membership in Valley VOTE is \$25 person with Board members, eligible to vote on issues, paying \$50. **Valley VOTE** is growing because it continues to be relevant to improving the quality of life for the citizens of L.A. There will be a fund raising event coming in June. Politicos will be invited to mingle with members. Money collected for dues is well spent as there is **NO** paid staff. Please mail your dues and contributions to **Valley VOTE:**

**14622 Ventura Blvd. #424 Sherman Oaks Ca. 91403**

#### **DWP Update—Jack Humphreville**

There is a never ending issue of the push to increase water rates (AKA shortage year rate increases). There will be a base allocation cut of 15% in the residential allocation. A multifaceted tier structure will increase rates based on water usage, size of the residential lot, and temperate climate of the city area (most of the Valley is allocated more water due to the heat of summer). The multiple tier increases will in most cases cost most users more. The new Mayor's budget increases the DWP contribution to the City General Fund (up from 7% revenue to 8% transfer “tax” on power usages). Water Base rates are going up 17% (since April 08) plus pass cost increases from MWD as well which is approximately up 27.3% base, with an increase as much as 42% if usage enters tier 2. This increase was slammed thru before people got any detail info. DWP will do strategic planning for next several years. Public method for input is TBD. The Ratepayer Advocate pushed for earlier has not happened yet, but we're still pushing.

#### **Transportation—Bart Reed**

Bart is critical of how we are spending our money locally. He indicated that the City is operating under the “Complete streets concept” which includes curbs, gutters, sidewalks, etc. If 1% of the transportation tax is going to each Council district, how is it being spent? \$1.5 million is being spent for the Roxford exit of the 5 freeway —BFI was to pay for it as condition of approval, but money got shifted somewhere else.

The President supports High Speed Rail as does 50%+ of those surveyed over increased air travel support. With such shortages of money, the City is considering selling the rights to private entities to collect parking meter fees. Transportation/Employment are getting some stimulus money into CA. On the Westside, the Cheviot Hills portion of the Expo line route should be done next year. Using the existing right of way saves

\$700 M.

**CD 2 Election and T.V.Public Access- Dave Hernandez**

Since Wendy Greuel becomes the new controller on July 1, 2009 the Mayor could appoint a replacement with City Council approval to complete her term or a special election could be held. Wendy would like to see a special election the first wk of July. NCs in her district support her idea. Any election must be at least 60 days after the formal announcement.

As of Jan 1 Time Warner studios are closed to the public access. 54 hrs/week of programming is still needed by the Corp for Public TV (ITA) to support 4 public channels. There will be 4 public access studios throughout the city; Van Nuys, West LA, etc. A question was raised about where the Cable Franchise fees went. \$25M (60% of the total amount) used to go to ITA for broadcasting Channels 35 &36 with the rest into the general fund. If ITA fails to use all of their money it goes back to general fund. Sacramento now does the negotiating with the cable companies.

---

The next Valley VOTE meeting will be on Monday, **May 18,2009** at **Galpin Ford**.

**Valley VOTE Mission Statement**

Valley VOTE, a diverse coalition of San Fernando Valley residents, business people, educators, community activists, and organizations, is committed to exploring and fostering the implementation of programs that empower the people of the San Fernando Valley and the City of Los Angeles, to improve local governance, education and public participation on policy matters.

*Please forward this Email to interested individuals and organizations. If you would like to be removed from our distribution list please send an Email to [javittisr@cs.com](mailto:javittisr@cs.com)*

[Click here to return to the Reports page](#)