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**COUNCILMEMBERS WORK TO ADDRESS SEWAGE SPILL AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFTERMATH**

*On July 11th, sewage from the Hyperion Water Reclamation Plant was discharged into the ocean*

LOS ANGELES (July 28, 2021) - Los Angeles City Councilmembers Mitch O'Farrell and Paul Koretz, two of the Council's leaders on environmental issues, today introduced a motion to address the July 11th sewage spill at the Hyperion Water Reclamation Plant (HWRP).

"I am deeply committed to protecting our environment, and I want every Angeleno to feel confident that this City takes its responsibilities as environmental stewards very seriously," said Councilmember O'Farrell, the chair of the Council's Energy, Climate Change, Environmental Justice, and Los Angeles River Committee. "It is critical that the City address the incident at Hyperion and fully inform Angelenos about what happened, while developing and implementing an action plan to repair the damage and prevent this from happening in the future."

On July 11th, a blockage in the HWRP system led to the discharge into the Pacific Ocean of approximately 17 million gallons of sewage (or 6% of HWRP's daily load) one mile offshore instead of the standard five miles. As a precautionary measure, nearby beaches were closed by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) for two days before being reopened after shoreline sampling verified the water was safe for swimming. LA Sanitation & Environment (LASAN), which operates HWRP, is currently engaged in extensive repairs to the facility. Effects to the treatment process have caused odors that have impacted the local community.

"The Sanitation workers whose quick thinking saved Hyperion from complete destruction should be commended for saving Santa Monica Bay from an even worse and ongoing sewage spill. While we work to make absolutely certain this never happens again, we need to repair with the future in mind," said Councilmember Paul Koretz. "Since we are already making plans to transform Hyperion to recycle 100% of our available purified wastewater via Operation NEXT, we could potentially save significant funding by using the current repairs to actively mitigate our ever-worsening megadrought."

The motion instructs LASAN to immediately report on the cause of the spill; its impacts on the ocean, beaches, and water quality; the current state of repairs at HWRP; steps it is taking to control the noxious fumes and odors impacting the local community; and steps to mitigate future similar occurrences, including public education efforts. The motion also instructs LASAN to report on its coordination with DPH regarding public notification of the spill, and how emergency public notification protocols can be improved. Lastly, the motion instructs LASAN to look for engineering opportunities to use the necessary repairs to begin the transformation towards the 100% recycled water Operation NEXT project and thereby maximize funding resources.

“The efforts of our hard-working and dedicated frontline staff contained the flow to a controlled discharge through the one-mile outfall, averting a much larger catastrophe - namely, the complete shutdown of the plant,” said Barbara Romero, LASAN general manager. “We consider ourselves good neighbors and are committed to providing full transparency regarding this incident. We will work with our partners to mitigate future occurrences and continue to be stalwart champions for our environment.”

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