

PUBLIC WORKS & GANG REDUCTION
MOTION

The Venice Canals are visited by hundreds of thousands of tourists each year and are home to thousands of residents. The canals are an iconic landmark and designated as Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument #270. Additionally, the residential district surrounding the canals is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Venice Canals are not just an important part of Venice, but they add to the entire ecosystem of the City of Los Angeles.

For several years, constituents and visitors of the canals have expressed concern that the water levels of the canals are often at unacceptably low levels. These levels are sometimes inconsistent with normal tidal patterns and often low enough to ground boats on the dry banks of the canal. Perhaps most perplexing are reports from residents that normal tidal flows generally return on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, only to recede again from Monday through Thursday.

This unusual reduction of water negatively affects an otherwise valuable attraction in the City. More importantly, the water reduction has resulted in significant environmental impacts, including the reduction in or loss of fish populations that once called the canals home. The aviary wildlife that relied on these fish as a source of food are also no longer present.

There is one inlet to the Venice Canals, controlled by two gates operated by a Bureau of Street Services (BSS) contractor. Within the last two years, the Bureau of Engineering (BOE) completed the replacement of the Washington Boulevard culverts and bulkhead as a component of a much-needed infrastructure improvement project. It was hoped this project would also address the issue of low water levels, but unfortunately it did not. Subsequently, BOE initiated a survey of the Venice Canals in a further attempt to identify the source of the leak. While the survey was initiated and off to a good start, a definitive answer regarding the source of the leak has not yet been provided. As such, there remain numerous theories as to the cause of the unusually low water levels but no conclusive explanation.

It is imperative for the numerous Venice Canal residents and visitors to get a conclusive answer as to the cause of the low water levels, because the canals are a vital asset of the City of Los Angeles.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Bureau of Engineering and Bureau of Street Services report to the City Council regarding: (1) the underlying cause of the decreased water levels in the Venice canals, (2) the current City oversight practices for the canal maintenance contractor, (3) the effectiveness of the current strategies utilized to manage water through the gates used to fill the canals, and (4) any recommendations for improvements to Venice Canal maintenance practices going forward.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Bureau of Engineering and Bureau of Street Services consult with any additional agencies, such as the Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors, that may have helpful information regarding the underlying cause of the decreased water levels or insight into best practices to manage the water levels in the canals.

PRESENTED BY:



MIKE BONIN
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SECONDED BY:



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ORIGINAL