



Date: April 17, 2007
To: Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Bonnie Lowenthal, Vice Mayor, Councilmember, 1st District *BL*
Subject: **Water Conservation and Reclamation**

During the upcoming years, our region faces the possibility of serious water shortages. By increasing efforts to reduce and recycle water use now, our City would be making a significant contribution to protecting our ongoing supply of water.

Communities throughout the State of California, including many in Los Angeles County, are facing water shortages due to drought, pipeline repairs, ecological concerns, and inefficient usage. On March 31, 2007, the Los Angeles Times reported, "Whether it's the Sierra, the Southland or the Colorado River Basin, every place that provides water to the region is dry." Mountain snowpacks vital to water imports are at their lowest level in decades, Southern California has received record low rainfall this year, and river systems remain in the grip of one of the worst basin droughts in centuries.

The Long Beach Water Department has outstanding water conservation programs, including: residential and commercial rebates on qualifying water saving devices, landscape classes featuring drought-friendly plants to reduce water usage, ewatering updates with periodic irrigation recommendations, a Water Ambassador program providing extensive public education and community outreach efforts, and more.

Expanding on the current programs offered by the Long Beach Water Department would allow for greater planning and preparation for long-term droughts. I would like to recommend that the City of Long Beach increase measures to reduce and recycle water usage.

Recommendation: In order to better understand the City of Long Beach's needs for water and to plan for drought preparedness in future years, I would like to request (1) a report back from the Long Beach Water Department on water usage and conservation measures; additional incentives and education efforts that can be offered to reduce water usage, possibly in partnership with the City of Long Beach or environmental nonprofits; a comparison of what other cities are doing to support water efficiency, (2) a report from the City Manager on water reclamation efforts in public and private buildings, including the feasibility of expanding such efforts to all new construction, (3) request increased usage of California native plants and increased usage of reclaimed water at all City facilities, including parks, parkways and libraries.