



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –Wednesday, March 2, 2016

ENGLANDER STATEMENT LADWP RATE INCREASE

LOS ANGELES— Today Councilmember Mitchell Englander released the following statement regarding his position on the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) rate increases:

Because of the events surrounding the Aliso Canyon Gas Leak and its effect on the residents and businesses in my district, I know all too well what can happen when vital infrastructure is allowed to age to the point where it fails. Infrastructure cannot be neglected. It requires constant investment and updating. Governance of a municipal utility is also essential infrastructure and DWP's is every bit as outdated as its pipes, transformers and transmission systems. It requires a dramatic overhaul.

Transparency and Customer Service are also essential cornerstones for a modern municipal utility. Unfortunately, the DWP doesn't have a great track record with either of these. The recent billing scandal and subsequent settlement of a ratepayer lawsuit are obvious, recent examples. It highlights a DWP culture that is so deeply mired in bureaucracy that it took over a year to resolve problems related to that debacle – including the ability to simply hire enough customer service professionals to meet the need.

I cannot support a rate increase that essentially allows the City to delay governance, transparency and customer service reform. Asking the ratepayers to pay more while waiting for reform that may never come is just putting the cart before the horse. Reform the governance. Improve the transparency. Provide improved customer service. This is the three-pronged formula for a successful rate increase strategy that I can support.

-Councilmember Mitchell Englander

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