

Communication from Public

Name: Katherine Pease
Date Submitted: 08/04/2021 09:37 PM
Council File No: 21-0839
Comments for Public Posting: Please find attached Heal the Bay's comment letter and support for #21-0839.



1444 9th Street
Santa Monica, CA
90401
(310) 451-1500

Heal the Bay

August 4, 2021

Chair O'Farrell and Members of the Energy, Climate Change, Environmental Justice, and River Committee
Los Angeles City Council
200 N Spring St, Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Support for Council File #21-0839 (O'Farrell, Koretz, Martinez), regarding the Hyperion Water Reclamation Plant wastewater spill

Dear Chair O'Farrell and Members of the Energy, Climate Change, Environmental Justice, and River Committee:

On behalf of Heal the Bay, we support Agenda Item 8, Council File #21-0839, regarding the Hyperion Water Reclamation Plant wastewater spill. Heal the Bay is an environmental organization with over 30 years of experience and 15,000 members dedicated to making the coastal waters and watersheds of greater Los Angeles safe, healthy, and clean. We would like to acknowledge that Heal the Bay is located on the traditional lands of the Tongva People and pay our respect to elders both past and present.

Heal the Bay was horrified to learn of the discharge of 17 million gallons of raw sewage into the Santa Monica Bay from Hyperion Water Reclamation Plant and the ensuing failure to adequately notify the public and close the beaches immediately. The protocols currently in place to close beaches and notify the public were not followed and even if they had been followed, are not adequate and need to be updated. It is unacceptable that the health of beachgoers was put at risk. This incident highlighted many areas that need immediate improvement to ensure the health and safety of our waters and the people that depend on them. Unfortunately, we recently learned that impacts are ongoing due to the significant damage that Hyperion sustained. Partially treated waste is being discharged at the 5-mile outfall, violating permit requirements and posing threats to marine ecosystems and public health. The odors are also causing significant impacts to surrounding communities. We all want the plant to get back to full-functionality as soon as possible and we acknowledge and appreciate the hard work by the Bureau of Sanitation (BOS) that is going towards this effort. However, the public needs transparency and we encourage the BOS to be proactive in their outreach and messaging going forward and for any future events that might occur. Further, we demand accountability and appropriate repercussions for the failures to protect public health and ocean health. What are the consequences of the failures in protocol and how do we ensure this does not happen again?



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Heal the Bay supports the motion put forth by Council members O'Farrell, Koretz, and Martinez, requesting reports from the BOS on what happened, coordination with LA County Department of Public Health (DPH), the status of repairs, and opportunities to actively build Operation NEXT during the repairs. Heal the Bay is in strong support of eliminating wastewater discharge to the ocean and moving to 100% recycled wastewater at Hyperion.

We also request the following recommendations be considered by City Council as well as BOS:

- Public notification needs to be immediate and effective. To be effective, the information must actually reach people and multiple methods of communication must be utilized including, but not limited to, social media, signage, text messages, and television and radio notices. Further, communication must be conducted in multiple languages. We recognize that the LA County DPH is the primary agency responsible for public notification, however, BOS also needs to be quick, proactive, and effective in their communication with other agencies and the public.
- Ocean water contamination should be tested using rapid methods in addition to traditional regulatory methods. Rapid methods, such as polymerase chain reaction (PCR)-based methods, should be employed to better protect public health as well as track the sewage plume. Rapid methods can provide results within a few hours compared to traditional methods which take 18 to 24 hours. Given the need to protect public health and the expected discharges from the plant over the coming weeks during the repair process, it is vital that postings and beach advisories can be issued immediately and in real time. BOS and LA County DPH should coordinate on this effort.
- The sewage plume should be monitored using remote sensing and water quality monitoring to understand its path, to predict impacted locations, and to increase monitoring in predicted locations of impact. Again, BOS and LA County DPH should coordinate on this effort.
- An effective sewage spill/discharge protocol must ensure that all parties are properly notified, including all cities in the Santa Monica Bay, non-profits, and other stakeholders.
- Heal the Bay recommends that BOS and LA County initiate a multi-agency Task Force to review protocols and recommendations. Non-profits and other stakeholders must be included in the Task Force and given the opportunity to review and provide feedback on any new and updated protocols. Heal the Bay would like to take an active role in a Task Force or any meetings and workshops given our role in protecting public health and the Santa Monica Bay, our expertise in water quality, and our history of advocacy on the Hyperion Water Reclamation Plant.



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The events that occurred on July 11 and 12 and the ongoing after effects must never happen again, from the discharge of 17 million gallons of sewage to the failures in protecting public health. Heal the Bay is committed to working with agencies, elected officials, and stakeholders to ensure the protection of the health of the Bay and all the people who use it and love it.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Katherine Pease at kpease@healthebay.org or (310) 451-1500 ext.141.

Sincerely,

Katherine Pease, PhD
Director of Science, Policy & Outreach
Heal the Bay

Communication from Public

Name: D
Date Submitted: 08/04/2021 09:47 PM
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Comments for Public Posting: I am a resident of Playa del Rey. Over the past few weeks my neighborhood has suffered significantly from the Hyperion plant accident. We are not being properly informed about the situation, we are not being compensated and multiple attempts to get answers from LA Sanitation have failed. Over the past weeks, I have developed such severe gastrointestinal symptoms that I feared I might have covid-19 and took a PCR test (negative, thankfully, and yes, I'm vaccinated!). I have had skin irritation and rashes. I have developed several boils. My eyes are itchy and irritated. My two indoor-only cats had several days of black runny discharge from their eyes. The air outside often smells strongly and unbearably of rotting sewage. I am currently forced to run my air conditioner and several air filters at all times to try to breathe clean air in my own apartment. This has literally tripled my electric bill. My recent LADWP bill was \$300+. When I put in a claim, LA San refused to pay it. As a disabled person on a fixed income this is a financial hardship. I have cardiac and respiratory issues and I do not know what the longterm adverse health effects will be from this exposure to whatever poison has been discharged from Hyperion. LA Sanitation has been quick to help the residents of El Segundo but has completely ignored those of us who are on the other side of LAX. When I called LA Sanitation seeking health information they just mechanically repeated the information about air conditioner reimbursement. We need to know exactly what we have been exposed to, and what the health implications are. If any medical care is necessary it needs to be fully covered. We need to be compensated for the excessive electric charges incurred from having to run air conditioners and air purifiers round the clock every day. It is not right that Hyperion has literally poisoned Playa del Rey and Westchester and they're shrugging it off and keeping us all in the dark.