

## **HHIA - Utility Report for Meeting on 2017.04.17**

### **Main San Gabriel Key Water Well Level updates:**

**Historic Low: 172.20** ft. (As of 2016.09.30)

**Historic High: 295.30** ft. on 1983.07.20 (Since entry of judgment in 1973)

Current: **183.10** ft. (As of 2017.03.10; only **62.00%** vs High @ 295.30 ft.).

Related link: <http://www.watermaster.org/>

### **SoCalGas Statement on Air Resources Board Vote to Approve South Coast Air Quality Management Plan**

Mar 23, 2017

Earlier today the California Air Resources Board (ARB) voted to approve the South Coast Air Quality Management District's (SCAQMD) Air Quality Management Plan. The Plan outlines strategies needed to bring the Los Angeles Basin into compliance with federal ozone and particulate matter pollution standards required by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Clean Air Act. SCAQMD's Plan achieves emissions reductions from stationary and mobile sources, and provides incentive funding to outfit heavy-duty vehicles with low-emission natural-gas engines. SoCalGas issued the following statement in response:

“ARB's approval of the AQMP and the State Implementation Plan strategy is an important milestone in moving forward to cleaner air. It is the culmination of four years of stakeholder engagement with state agencies, and provides an important framework for achieving emissions reductions to attain better air quality. We agree with the focus in the local District and State plans on accelerating mobile source NOx reductions. The single most impactful strategy for reducing mobile source emissions is to incentivize the deployment of near-zero heavy-duty trucks that are commercially available today. These next-generation heavy-duty, natural gas engines are the most cost-effective solution to help meet our air quality and climate change goals. They reduce NOx emissions by 90 percent. And, when used with renewable gas, the near-zero engines can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent or more.

We look forward to continuing to work with the local air districts and ARB to develop cost-effective measures to implement these plans.

#### **Related link:**

<http://sempra.mediaroom.com/index.php?s=19080&item=137272>

### **Who is behind an initiative to repeal utility taxes throughout the San Gabriel Valley?**

By [Claudia Palma](#), *The Pasadena Star-News*

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A Pasadena-headquartered group attempting to get anti-tax measures on the ballot in several cities across Southern California has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for that effort over the last few years, according to state campaign finance records.

TeaPAC, a political action committee that has raised more than \$222,000 since 2011, has helped set up small, grassroots groups targeting utility users taxes in their cities.

TeaPAC has done this through its project, the California Tax Limitation Committee, which recently got a measure seeking to repeal the utility users tax in Sierra Madre on the April 2018 ballot in that city. Voters will decide this April on a similar CTLC-backed ballot effort in Arcadia.

Utility users taxes are coveted by many municipal officials in the region. They have said without UUTs contributing to their general funds, cities would have to make drastic cuts to their libraries, community services, and even police and fire departments in order to balance their budgets.

Some cities also use funds for much needed infrastructure projects, which may also be delayed without the UUT. In many cities, the UUT is the second or third source of revenue.

But the leadership of CTLC believes that cities can run just as they did before the UUT, which they contend is used mostly to fund city employee pensions. The UUT in most cities is collected from utility services such as gas, water, electricity, telephone and other utility bills, which are then put into the general fund.

“I grew up in this area, I love this area, but these city officials are really spending way too much money,” said Sterling Contreras, manager with the CTLC. “I love unions in the private sector, but in the public sector, it’s hurting the taxpayers. They’re really breaking the backs of these cities.”

Contreras said CTLC serves as advisors to the local groups who want to form in cities and advise on how to get a repeal measure on the ballot. In addition to the Sierra Madre and Arcadia groups, CTLC has formed groups in Pasadena and South Pasadena. Glendale now has a group, and cities as far as Moreno Valley and San Bernardino have seen organizing by the CTLC.

Some of these local city committees have managed to gather the required amount of valid voter signatures to place a ballot measures on upcoming municipal elections to repeal their UUT, while others are just starting to gather signatures or even members.

Donations made to TeaPAC and CTLC are used for offering resources to some of the groups, but CTLC doesn’t do any specific fundraising for each of these city committees, Contreras said. Each group can do their own fundraising if they wish.

In 2015 alone, TeaPAC has raised about \$40,000 mostly from Pasadena-area individuals, groups and businesses, according to state records. TeaPAC began in Pasadena in 2009, while CTLC began about three years ago.

Contreras said the contributions have been used for TeaPAC and CTLC’s operating costs, including paying some staff at their Pasadena headquarters, printing flyers, voter lists and other resources. CTLC has helped groups gather signatures through volunteer efforts.

Mike Alexander, CTLC president, said he’s happy about the progress of the CTLC city groups.

“We have had greater interest than ever in reducing taxes, because of unprecedented taxation levels, at the federal, state and local level,” he said. “Citizens are anxious to get tax relief. These cities embody government waste with their unsustainable pension plans, fiscal mismanagement.”

The Arcadia committee was the first to successfully place a measure on the ballot for the April election. Glendale voters will decide on their city’s measure in the June 2016 election, and South Pasadena voters in November 2017 election.

“There has been enough support (in Arcadia), but we shall see if they succeed,” said Contreras. “Getting the measure on the ballot is not a whole big deal, but actually getting it to pass can be difficult.”

Several of the city committees have tried more than once to get the initiative on the ballot, but failed to get the required number of valid signatures. A group in Pasadena tried unsuccessfully two years ago and have since had no action. In Glendale, the group did not meet the required voter signatures and tried again late last year.

In South Pasadena, the group tried three times before successfully getting a measure on the ballot.

Officials have said they need UUTs to fund important projects for their cities.

“The proponents don’t understand that we’re really trying hard to address many public works projects that have not been addressed in years,” said South Pasadena Mayor Diana Mahmud. “If we don’t have the means to do that now, it gets expensive in the long run. Most of our residents understand that unlike some nearby larger cities, we don’t have a large sales tax revenue.”

Glendale’s UUT brings in just 3.5 percent of the city’s revenue, or about \$28 million of its nearly \$800 million budget.

In Sierra Madre, the voters will decide whether to increase the UUT to its previous rate of 10 percent from the 8 percent it is now, and before it sunsets to 6 percent later this year.

Christine Soldate, a resident of more than 40 years, said she didn’t think the UUT was much of a burden compared to the benefits it provides to her city.

“There are a few people here who take a more conservative approach. I believe in what is best for the city,” she said. “\$10 to \$15 every other month is worth it.”

But Alexander called city officials’ support for UUTs “pure nonsense” and “propaganda.” He pointed to paying off the city’s pension obligations as the primary reason for extending UUT taxes.

“They’ve had the money all along,” he said. “They just haven’t spent it right.”

**Related link:**

<http://www.pasadenastarnews.com/government-and-politics/20160320/who-is-behind-an-initiative-to-repeal-utility-taxes-throughout-the-san-gabriel-valley>

by *Ted Chang*

HHIA Board Member, Utility