

# **Santa Monica Clean Beaches and Ocean Ballot Measure “V”**

## **What is Measure “V”?**

Measure V will establish a Clean Beaches and Ocean Special Parcel Tax to be collected from all Santa Monica property owners. Measure V was placed on the November ballot by the Santa Monica City Council as the most equitable source of funding to pay for new urban runoff treatment projects that will prevent our unhealthful water pollution, from reaching Santa Monica beaches and the Santa Monica Bay.

## **Why is Measure “V” needed?**

Large amounts of dangerous bacteria, pesticides, toxic chemicals, oil and grease, trash and other pollutants are deposited on our beaches and into Santa Monica Bay every year through the City’s storm drain system as urban runoff. These unhealthful pollutants are a problem during both wet weather (rain events) and dry weather (runoff from over-irrigation, washing of sidewalks, vehicles, and business equipment, and draining of pools) periods. Also, very strict pollution reduction regulations for storm drains have been enacted by the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, the State agency responsible for protecting the beaches and ocean from storm drain pollution. Santa Monica may be in violation of these new regulations and subject to \$10,000 per day fines without construction of new projects that will be funded by Measure V to reduce storm drain pollution.

## **Will Measure “V” provide other community benefits?**

Yes. Santa Monica operates and maintains 20 miles of storm drains, 650 catch basins and other major storm drain facilities, such as the

Santa Monica Urban Runoff Recycling Facility (SMURRF) and the Centinela dry and wet weather urban runoff treatment system. Some of the City's storm drains are over 60 years old and in poor condition. A portion of the funds provided by Measure V will be used to upgrade these storm drains to better protect Santa Monica from flooding. In addition, the new projects that will be made possible through Measure V will increase reuse of stormwater, a local water resource, and water conservation (avoiding the use of expensive imported potable water), as well as improve the quality of existing open spaces and create new open spaces.

**What types of new projects and programs will Measure “V” pay for to keep unhealthful pollution off our beaches and protect the Santa Monica Bay?**

Funding from Measure V will allow for the construction and installation of needed devices to capture and treat stormwater and dry weather runoff pollution from within Santa Monica's boundaries; to divert stormwater runoff to open areas and allow it to percolate naturally into the soil; to build cistern systems that will allow wasted runoff to be re-used for landscape irrigation and other beneficial purposes; to construct systems to divert polluted dry-weather and some wet weather runoff to the sanitary sewer system where, like wastewater, it will be highly treated; to increase our inspection and enforcement activities to prevent pollution and catch polluters when they break the law; to increase public education and outreach activities that make sure residents and businesses are aware of the problem and what they can do to help solve it; and to increase the cleaning and maintenance of the storm drain pipes to remove more toxic pollutants and prevent flooding of streets and sidewalks.

**How much money will Measure “V” raise and what is my cost?**

Measure V will raise approximately \$2.3 million in annual tax revenues from Santa Monica property owners to be adjusted annually for inflation. There is no “sunset” date for the tax because the pollution prevention work that must be accomplished is a continuing responsibility for the citizens of Santa Monica. An individual property

owner's cost will depend on the property type and the parcel size of the property he or she owns since to ensure equity the amount of the tax paid is directly correlated with the estimated amount of stormwater runoff from a parcel. For example, all single family residential property owners will pay \$84 per year; an average condominium owner will pay \$30 per year; an average apartment owner will pay \$192 per year; and an average commercial property owner will pay \$384 per year. However, although every single family residential parcel will have the same tax rate, all other parcels will be taxed based on their specific size and property type so the tax amount may vary significantly between multi-family residential and commercial property owners. The City Council will also be considering the adoption of Measure V tax exemptions based on income, age or disability.

**This tax will only be paid by Santa Monica property owners so will we be paying for the clean up of the rest of Los Angeles County's polluted stormwater?**

Absolutely not. The funds from Measure V will be used to solve our own pollution problems being created within Santa Monica's boundaries, not to fix Los Angeles County's stormwater problems. Santa Monica has already forged a 50/50 financial partnership with the City of Los Angeles to build and operate the SMURRF treatment plant, which captures dry and some wet weather runoff from the Pico-Kenter storm drain, the Kenter portion of which originates in Los Angeles. The City of Los Angeles' voters also approved a \$500 million stormwater bond measure in 2004 that is being used to address their part of the stormwater-urban runoff pollution problem. Measure V would allow us to do our fair share to make our beaches and ocean safe for the citizens of Santa Monica and stay in compliance with new regional regulations. Every other city in Los Angeles County is responsible for compliance with the same requirements as face Santa Monica and will have to come up with their own funding measures to do so. Moreover, a significant portion of Santa Monica's runoff from its eastern and southern borders enters the City of Los Angeles, and it is Santa Monica's goal to clean this runoff before it enters Los Angeles.

## **What department would manage the implementation of the projects funded through Measure “V”?**

The Environmental and Public Works Management Department would be responsible for the implementation of the Watershed Management Program and the expenditure of Measure V revenues on eligible projects with approval and oversight by the City Manager, City Council and an independent citizen’s oversight committee.

## **What happens if Measure “V” does not pass?**

If Measure V does not pass, Santa Monica will not readily have the additional funds required to begin implementation of the Watershed Management Plan and bring the City into compliance with the pollution reduction regulations of the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board. Santa Monica may not be able to achieve the urban runoff pollution reduction goals of the Santa Monica Sustainable City Plan. Cities that do not comply with the Regional Board’s regulatory standards for pollution reduction will be fined up to \$10,000 per day and will be subject to separate and third party legal action to force compliance. The runoff pollution from within Santa Monica’s boundaries reaching Santa Monica’s beaches and the Santa Monica Bay may remain untreated and potentially dangerously high. A recent scientific study conducted by USC researchers determined that pollution levels at the region’s beaches currently cause approximately 1,000,000 gastrointestinal illnesses per year at a cost of about \$30,000,000. Moreover, these figures exclude illness numbers and costs associated with other water pollution-related problems such as ear, nose, throat and respiratory illnesses. The local Santa Monica economy that is heavily dependent on visitor services may be negatively affected by our failure to make the beaches and ocean safer for residents and visitors.

## **What concerns have been raised about Measure V?**

Some property owners are concerned that they already pay an annual fee for stormwater programs and should not have to pay an

additional tax: the current annual fee has not been increased in more than 11 (eleven) years and is now inadequate to pay for the job that needs to be done. Multi-family property owners have expressed concerns that their tenants should have to pay the tax if it passes: the City Council agrees with this view and directed staff to request the Rent Control Board to allow a pass through of the costs from the tax to tenants. Many residents and businesses are concerned that Santa Monica's Measure V funds will be used to clean up the problems caused by the residents and businesses in other cities: none of the Measure V funds will be used to pay for projects or programs not directly related to Santa Monica's pollution. Santa Monica will not spend any Measure V money to fix other cities' stormwater pollution problems.