



MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Sachi A. Hamai, Executive Officer-
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

At its meeting held January 16, 2007, the Board took the following action:

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The following item was called up for consideration:

The Director of Internal Services' joint recommendation with the Chief Administrative Officer, and Directors of Public Works and Planning, to approve the proposed Countywide Energy and Environmental Policy which provides guidelines for development and enhancement of energy conservation and environmental programs within County departments; instruct the Director of Internal Services to establish and chair a Los Angeles County Energy and Environmental Team which shall: a) develop recommendations for implementing and monitoring energy and environmental initiatives for approval by the Board; b) implement and monitor Board-approved target reductions in energy usage Countywide; c) provide regular reports to the Board on the status of County energy and environmental programs; and d) provide information to the public and other entities on energy and environmental programs; also approve the following related actions:

Instruct the Director of Internal Services to join the California Climate Action Registry to assist the County in establishing goals for reduction of greenhouse gases; and

Approve the Sustainable Design Program for County capital improvement and refurbishment projects and direct the Chief Administrative Officer and the Director of Public Works to implement the Program, including the establishment of a Green Building Component and Sustainable Design Component.

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The following statement was entered into the record for Supervisors Yaroslavsky and Molina:

“Today’s report calls for a ‘Sustainable Design Program’ which would seek to incorporate ‘green’ building principles into all new County buildings. Under this Program the Chief Administrative Officer and Director of Public Works would review each project in the County’s Capital Program to determine the feasibility of incorporating sustainable design features. The feasibility assessment would be based upon the ability of such design features ‘to accommodate the project’s objectives and schedule; development and implementation costs, potential environmental and economic benefits, and the availability of funding.’ Following this assessment, some projects would be built to the United States Green Building Council’s ‘Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design’ (LEED) standard; some would incorporate sustainable design features but not achieve the LEED standard; and some would not include sustainable design features at all.

“Unfortunately, this approach requires that ‘green’ building principles take a back seat to all other considerations. It fails to set an ambitious goal, or any goal at all, in the area of building energy efficiency, and it allows the County to shirk its obligation to play a leadership role in promoting energy efficiency and environmental protection.

“The LEED program discussed above is recognized as the national standard for environmentally responsible building design, construction and operation. Numerous jurisdictions across the country have therefore adopted this standard with appropriate provisions to ensure sufficient flexibility to provide for unforeseen circumstances. Public agencies that have adopted this standard include the City of Los Angeles, the State of California, the California State University System, the United States General Services Administration, and the United States Army, Navy and Air Force. There is no reason why the County of Los Angeles should not join this list.

“An estimated 65% of total U.S. energy consumption is directly attributable to the construction and maintenance of buildings. The fossil fuel that is used to produce this energy is a factor in global warming. Environmentally sound building techniques have also been shown to reduce indoor air pollution, which the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has identified as one of the top-five public health threats in America. There is also a sound financial reason to support a green building policy: the County spends nearly \$150 million per year on electricity and natural gas, a figure which is sure to rise in the near and long-term. The energy-saving measures adopted by this Board for the County’s new data center are estimated to reduce energy consumption by 30% per year while adding less than 3% to the initial cost of construction. The City of Los Angeles has demonstrated that the marginal cost increases associated with building more energy efficient buildings are recovered within just seven years.

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“Adoption of an appropriate LEED standard is environmentally and fiscally sound. It is necessitated by the County’s leadership position as the largest County in the United States and largest employer in our region. Governor Schwarzenegger has proposed that the State of California take action to curb global warming; the County should do so as well. Finally, the County should also consider incorporating sustainable design requirements into development standards for unincorporated areas.”

Therefore, Supervisor Yaroslavsky made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Molina, that the Director of Internal Services’ joint recommendation with the Chief Administrative Officer and the Directors of Public Works and Planning be amended to:

1. Require all new County buildings of at least 10,000 gross square feet in size that are authorized and fully funded on or after February 15, 2007 to achieve at least the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver level of certification (or a successor equivalent standard established by the U.S. Green Building Council). In collaboration with the Chief Administrative Officer, Director of Public Works or any other lead department responsible for construction of a given project shall pursue USGBC LEED certification at the Silver level or higher and shall prepare at the earliest possible stage of development a design and funding plan to achieve this certification. The Board may designate any new County building of 10,000 gross square feet or more to be exempt from LEED certification requirements upon the recommendation of the Chief Administrative Officer. Such a recommendation shall be made in consultation with the Energy and Environmental Team and provide a design plan that incorporates all feasible sustainable design features;
2. Instruct the Directors of Public Works and Planning to investigate and report back within six months on opportunities to incorporate LEED standards or similar requirements into the County’s development standards for all appropriate industrial, commercial and residential development within unincorporated areas and develop a recommended implementation program, including changes to building and zoning codes, that will allow for measurable improvements to energy efficiency, third-party verification of results, and ongoing flexibility to easily incorporate new standards of green building design as they are developed by the United States Green Building Council or other similar accreditation organizations; and

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3. Instruct the Directors of Public Works and Planning to report back to the Board within six months with recommended changes to the zoning and subdivision ordinances incorporating Low Impact Design (LID) standards for new development projects. The Director of Public Works should include in the report back an analysis of the feasibility of incorporating LID standards into all future road and flood control infrastructure projects.

Supervisor Burke made the following statement:

“The direction the Board takes today to incorporate principles of energy efficiency into our design program is an essential step for energy and environmental preservation. However, in its current state, Supervisors Yaroslavsky and Molina’s motion does not specifically mention the importance of efficient water use in landscaping. Under the proposed model, the Countywide Energy and Environmental Team would have the discretion to incorporate energy-efficient landscaping into their designs. Even Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification would credit projects for their inclusion of environmentally-friendly landscaping, but would also not make drought tolerant landscaping mandatory. I urge the Board to take specific steps to make sure this policy is included in our new plan.”

Therefore, Supervisor Burke made a motion, seconded by Antonovich, to amend Supervisors Yaroslavsky and Molina’s motion to also require that all new County buildings use only drought tolerant landscaping, wherever feasible, for projects that are authorized or fully funded on or after February 15, 2007. Supervisors Yaroslavsky and Molina accepted Supervisor Burke’s amendment.

Dr. Lance A. Williams, U.S. Green Building Council, Jim Stewart, The Sierra Club, Irma R. Muñoz, Mujeres de la Tierra, Claire Robinson, Amigos de Los Rios, Eli Lipmon, Jim Stewart, and other interested persons addressed the Board.

After discussion, on motion of Supervisor Yaroslavsky, seconded by Supervisor Molina, unanimously carried, the Director of Internal Services’ attached joint recommendation with the Chief Administrative Officer and the Directors of Public Works and Planning, was adopted as amended.

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Attachment

Copies distributed:

- Each Supervisor
- Chief Administrative Officer
- County Counsel
- Director of Internal Services
- Director of Public Works
- Planning Director