



Sen. Hertzberg's Legislation Considers Every Last Drop

Multiple Bills Aim to Save Water and Money

Control Board to consider convening an advisory group to develop recommendations and regulations to achieve the goal.

"California's drought has forced us to rethink everything we do with water and consider how to be more intelligent in how we manage it," Hertzberg said. "This legislation is a no-brainer. Let's find a way to reuse treated water instead of dumping it into the ocean. We have to stop thinking of treated water as a waste product – it's a valuable resource to be utilized."

California discharges an estimated 1.5 billion gallons of treated water – the equivalent of 18 Rose Bowls filled with water – into the ocean every day. In Los Angeles County alone, 650 million gallons of treated water goes into the Pacific daily. Hertzberg suggests that more water treatment facilities transfer this water to spreading fields where the water percolates into groundwater basins that we can tap into as needed.

Hertzberg's most recently introduced legislation is SB 1298, which makes changes in state law to help local governments finance stormwater projects and provides options for water agencies to develop different rates – lower ones for low-income households and higher ones for extravagant water users.

"L.A. County and the San Gabriel Valley do a brilliant job of capturing stormwater from mountains," he said, adding that his hope is this legislation will help more agencies complete stormwater reuse projects.

In May, SB 919 passed the Senate and is headed to the Assembly. This legislation requires the state to better coordinate its power by directing excess

renewable energy that can occur during the middle of the day toward water agencies that recycle or purify water.

"Confronted with drought and climate change, California must manage its water

and energy as intelligently as possible," Hertzberg said. "SB 919 takes advantage of excess energy by directing it toward those who are recycling water or making it drinkable and helping to lower their costs."

In the future, Hertzberg plans to introduce legislation addressing water rights and the water market, especially as it pertains to agriculture.

"Rising cost, the drought, tensions with farmers, issues with environmentalists and climate change, all of those have converged to be the moment in history where we need to really elevate our discussion on water resources," Hertzberg said. "New day, new rules." ○

By Elizabeth Smilor
Special Sections Writer

State Sen. Bob Hertzberg, D-Van Nuys, has studied the intricacies of water issues and policy since he wrote his college thesis on the topic 40 years ago. Throughout the ebb and flow of his career in and out of government, water has been a constant.

"You'll see me introduce water bills every year that I'm in the Senate," Hertzberg said as he discussed some of his recent legislation. "These (bills) are just one small step for water policy toward one large deliverable of how we do water policy in California."

Hertzberg, who was elected to the Senate in 2014, previously served in the State Assembly from 1996-2002. During his time in the Assembly, including two years as Speaker, Hertzberg helped shape and pass legislation regarding agriculture-to-urban water transfers that provided a framework to end nearly seven decades of California/Colorado River water disputes.

"I left politics for 12 years and I came back wanting to fix things for the next generation," Hertzberg said. Water is one issue he knew he would address and he just served on a commission for the Metropolitan Water District to look ahead 50 years in water management.

Two bills Hertzberg has introduced this year, SB 163 and SB 1298, address recycled water and stormwater, respectively. "Both were treated as waste products historically. We just simply cleaned them up and threw them in the ocean."

Senate Bill 163 requires agencies that dump treated water to come up with plans to beneficially reuse the water and sets a goal of reusing half of the discharged water within a decade of the agencies submitting their plans. The bill also directs the State Water Resources

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D-Van Nuys



California wastewater treatment facilities discharge an estimated 1.5 billion gallons of treated water via rivers into the ocean every day. In Los Angeles County alone, 650 million gallons of treated wastewater dumps into the Pacific Ocean daily. Sen. Hertzberg's legislation would require wastewater treatment facilities to capture and reuse at least 50 percent of that now wasted water.