

## **Chick to Scrutinize Port Decision**

### **Controller questions officials' actions in reviving bid process for use of 'green terminal.'**

By Jessica Garrison and Deborah Schoch

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City Controller Laura Chick announced Monday that she plans to scrutinize the Los Angeles port's decision to throw out the bids from shipping companies that want to use its new "green terminal," starting the process again with less stringent environmental criteria.

Chick said she would look at that controversial step as part of a long-planned follow-up audit on leasing practices at the nation's largest port.

In 2003, Chick criticized the port for failing to competitively bid leases and for ignoring sound business controls.

Port spokesman Arley Baker said the port would welcome Chick's input. "This is the first open bid process we've ever had for a terminal here," Baker said. "There's opportunity for regrouping and refining the process."

The port last week weakened a plan to limit emissions from ships berthed at Terminal Island. By using electricity instead of diesel fuel while docked, the vessels are intended to be a national model for reduced ship pollution.

The port rejected all four bids from shipping companies, including two that promised to meet the port's goal of operating 80% of their ships with electrical power within two years. The port asked for new bids last week, requiring that 70% of docked ships use electricity within three years.

Concern about air pollution from the Port of Los Angeles has grown in recent months, prompted by studies showing that it stunts children's lungs and that nearby residents have higher rates of lung and throat cancer.

Also on Monday, state Sen. Richard Alarcon, who is running for mayor, questioned the port's actions and urged Chick to examine them closely.

"I am completely dumbfounded at how the city can continue to thumb their noses at ethical standards," Alarcon said. "All I know is, the people who reside near the port are being hurt unnecessarily because the pollutants will be spewed out into their community." Port officials have been trying to lease the land on Terminal Island for more than two years - an effort that has stirred controversy.

Last year, Mayor James K. Hahn's office interfered in the port commission's deliberations over the lease. Some commissioners favored P&O Nedlloyd Container Line Ltd. of London, while the mayor's office wanted to accommodate Taiwan-based Evergreen Marine Corp. The port commission finally put the berths up for bid, a first for the port.

Critics speculate that the port rejected the bids and altered its request to make it easier for Evergreen and Tokyo-based Yusen Terminal Inc. to qualify.

P&O Nedlloyd and another company, Hong Kong-based Orient Overseas Container Line, had both offered to meet the 80% goal, while neither Evergreen nor Yusen said it would hook up ships at the site.

On Monday, Hahn's office said neither he nor his aides have had anything to do with the current bidding.

"The mayor is a resident of San Pedro. He and his children breathe that air every day," said Deputy Mayor Doane Liu. "The mayor is steadfastly committed to making the Port of Los Angeles the greenest port in the world."

## **Manure, dairy issues raise legislator's hackles in Wasco**

**Importation of cow waste causes fears of water and air pollution, Florez says**

By GRETCHEN WENNER

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One of the most interesting numbers to come out of a state Senate hearing in Wasco Monday had little to do with cow manure, the topic at hand.

Instead, a waste broker's assertion that Chino-area dairymen are selling land to developers for \$300,000 to \$400,000 an acre gave some indication of the heavy stakes driving manure politics these days.

What's more, Southern California regulatory deadlines are apparently pressuring the industry's migration from the Chino basin, its former stronghold, to San Joaquin Valley sites, including Kern County.

The informational hearing run by state Sen. Dean Florez, D-Shafter, addressed possible impacts and benefits of hundreds of thousands of tons of Chino manure trucked into Kern County.

Florez, in seeking to answer how much manure Kern can safely absorb, turned up a wide-ranging batch of information showing gaps in planning and communication among regional regulators.

For example, new rules say some 623,000 tons of manure now applied annually to crops in the San Jacinto River Basin near Chino will have to go elsewhere in three years because of water contamination.

Florez asked where that tonnage will end up.

"Nobody has an answer to that right now," said Robert Holub, division chief of the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board, which oversees the Chino and San Jacinto basins.

Air and water regulators from Chino and the Kern area told Florez that there had been little communication between them about the manure hauls, even though the exported tonnage could affect air and water quality here.

In the last three years, almost 375,000 tons of Chino manure was hauled to Kern County.

The Santa Ana water board started detailed tracking in 2000, although waste has been hauled out of the area since at least the 1980s.

When applied correctly to crops, regulators and farmers agreed, manure is an excellent fertilizer.

But when overused, cow manure can pollute ground and surface water, as it has in the Chino basin.

David Sholes, who heads the dairy unit of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, told Florez the agency is not regulating application.

"Can you assure the public," Florez asked him, "that manure that has been imported to this county ... does not have potential to contaminate groundwater?"

"No, Senator, I cannot," Sholes replied.

Salts and nitrates have caused extensive contamination of Chino's ground and surface waters. They have also threatened the drinking water in Orange County. A \$45 million de-salting facility now cleans Chino's drinking water.

Dairies created 60 percent of the Chino basin's water problems, the board's extensive studies found.

The problem, said Holub from the Santa Ana water board, was too many cows too close together. Three to five cows per acre, he said, is considered ideal. Chino has counted up to 30 to 40 animals per acre. Most new Kern dairies are aiming to hit the lower number.

"There was no planning in Chino in those days," he said.

Farmers at the hearing expressed skepticism.

Peter Belluomini, president of the Kern County Farm Bureau, needled Florez about his use of manure numbers, calling them "good political spin."

He added that dry manure used as fertilizer cannot be compared to biosolids or green waste trucked into Kern County.

"You can't paint this product with that same brush," Belluomini said.

Skip Barwick, a waste broker who hauls green waste and cow manure, told Florez it would be "crazy" to assume farmers would pollute their own land by applying too much waste.

"It's sad, when people want to keep calling dairies a pollutant," said Barwick, who also said Chino dairy farmers have been selling land for up to \$400,000 an acre.

Richard Reyneveld, a local dairy contractor, called the hearing a "kangaroo court."

Manure is an organic fertilizer that's better for soil than petroleum-based commercial mixes commonly in use, Reyneveld said.

Kern has about 1 million acres of farmland, participants said. Much crop land can safely take on 10 to 17 tons of dry manure per acre. Citrus and vegetable farmers who spoke said they typically apply five tons or less per acre.

Dairy issues have been an issue in Kern for years, but in June, a slew of new dairy proposals came to light. More than two dozen possible projects that could bring more than 214,000 animals are currently on the books in Kern. Already, an estimated 290,000 cows live here on 55 dairy-related facilities.