



# LA CityWorks

May 28, 2010

# Budget Update

LOCAL 721



Friday, May 28, 2010

*From the Desk of President Bob Schoonover*

In January we were facing a \$600 million shortfall as projected by the CAO. Here in late May the ever-changing number seems to be about \$100 million.

**The City's adopted a budget with a bunch of holes in it.** The city wants to fill those holes with 761 worker layoffs now, add 1,000 more later, and throw 26 furlough days on top of all that—or fill it with worker concessions.

**In meetings this spring with the CAO, Mayor's office, and City Council, union members and leaders have had one consistent message: We won't take any steps backward, and we have a better solution.** Last year we made a tremendous sacrifice, voting to put off our contract raises and give up hours to see our city through this crisis. That's hurt my family, and I know it's hurt yours too.

**So when politicians talk about how we need to "step up" with concessions, that's why I told the Los Angeles Times two weeks ago, "We've already done that."** That's why sanitation workers drove trash trucks with signs reading, "Don't give up on LA, Mr. Mayor"—because to me, that's what rejecting our sacrifice, cutting services and furloughing workers would mean.

What happens if the city lays off a Coalition member? Under our agreement, if even one Coalition worker is laid off we all get our raises. The City Council voted unanimously for that plan, so they can't pretend they don't remember.

**Why would we give the city new concessions when we can't get them to take the one we already gave?** Without real leadership at City Hall, there's no end in sight.

**Here's the alternative: Our work to find new revenues and management cost-savings has already shrunk the shortfall.**

Some City Council members have really stood strong for city services. Street Services GM Bill Robertson is already on record saying that the general managers of the city had a plan for cuts without layoffs. This budget hole is not structural—it's only there because of the recession. So it makes no sense to fill it with layoffs—a structural change that does long-term damage to the city's ability to deliver the services people need in good times and bad.

Let's look at the big picture. The city workforce has already reduced itself in just the last year by 3,500 workers through early retirement and normal attrition—down to 1997 levels. If you add those 700 to 1,700 layoffs coupled with furloughs the effects on public service and public safety will be dramatic.

It's going to take the mayor and elected officials to get us out of this. **Call City Council President Eric Garcetti right now at (213) 473-7013 and tell him you know damn well that he can save city services without layoffs and furloughs, and city workers and city residents expect him to do just that.**

In solidarity,

Bob Schoonover

LA Heavy Duty Equipment Mechanic



# Fighting for Public Safety & Services at LAFD & City Hall



LAFD Senior Mechanic Tony Mastrolia addresses media with Firefighter Pat McOsker, Bob Schoonover and co-workers from the Avenue 19 LAFD garage.

LA Custodians on the layoff list address City Council.

**LAFD Maintenance Facility** - LA City Firefighters and Fire Department Mechanics exposed for reporters on Friday 5/28 how the city's furlough plan would hurt public safety and emergency preparedness.

Reporters from KNBC-4, KTLA-5, KABC-7, Fox11, KNX and KPCC heard how the Fire Department's reserve fleet is already dangerously overstretched due to manpower losses and an already imposed hiring freeze. Plans to furlough experienced mechanics and other employees across the city will have a direct impact on public safety.

***"We already have a 44% vacancy rate for mechanics right now, and a hiring freeze,"*** said Tony Mastrolia, Senior Fire Department Mechanic at the Avenue 19 garage. ***"If we keep cutting mechanics' hours our firefighters might have to go back to an old-fashioned bucket brigade when fire season hits in the coming weeks."***

***"I'm deeply concerned that the cuts to civilian hours in the budget approved by City Council will threaten our readiness to respond when there's a fire, an earthquake, or even a resident who has a heart attack or serious injury in their home,"*** said Pat McOsker, a Los Angeles Firefighter for 30 years and President of UFLAC, the United Firefighters of Los Angeles City.

Transportation Engineer Kevin Ecker, as a former EAA member who voted with colleagues to join SEIU, was furloughed 26 days this fiscal year. ***"Public safety goes beyond police and fire,"*** he says. ***"The professionals of the city including engineers protect the public each and every day. Layoffs and furloughs take away our ability to keep the public safe."***

Read more and download our Fire Department fact sheet from <http://www.seiu721.org/2010/05/fire-personnel-tell-the-story.php>.

**LA City Hall** - 30 of the Custodians on the layoff list addressed City Council today. ***"We work hard and if you lay us off service will decline and you'll leave us unable to take care of our families,"*** Custodian Gerardo Olmost said.

The Council's budget lays off 48 Custodians, among the lowest-paid workers in the city. It will impoverish them and their families in order to give the remaining Coalition workers \$27 million in raises they voted not to take this fiscal year.

**Call Council President Eric Garcetti at (213) 473-7013:  
Tell him to save city services without layoffs and furloughs that hurt residents & jeopardize public safety.**