



City Councilmember Scott Sherman

District 7

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Audit Shows Abysmal Response Times for Water Meter Lid Replacement

*Latest Performance Audit is Further Proof
that Major Reforms Needed Within Public Utilities Department*

San Diego – The Audit Committee reviewed a report from the City Auditor’s office investigating the performance of the Public Utility Department’s (PUD) responsibility to repair and replace water meter lids and covers. Councilmember Sherman requested the audit two years ago.

Water meter lid and box replacement is a critical component in the metering system since they protect water meters from exposure and damage. In addition, broken boxes and lids can be a legal liability to the City since they can create increased liability for trip and fall injuries.

The results of the [performance audit](#) were troubling. Some of the main concerns include:

- Lids took 11 months on average to replace and 1.7 years to replace boxes. The department’s goal for replacement is six months; which was only met 25% of the time
- Department employees worked only 3.6 hours out of an eight-hour work day.
- There is a current backlog of over 25,000 broken boxes and lids citywide

“The lack of accountability at PUD and the resulting backlog of broken water meters is an extreme disservice to taxpayers,” said Councilmember Sherman. “It is evident that there is a cultural problem within PUD that must be changed. I am committed to holding them accountable and fixing this problem.”

The results of this report and past performance audits show that there is a much larger problem within PUD management and citywide operations as a whole. Yesterday, the City Council reviewed a [Human Capital Management audit](#) that revealed the inability of management to discipline poor job performers and reward top talent. In fact, 65% of rank and file employees agreed with management’s concerns.

Burdensome restrictions from collective bargaining agreements have handcuffed management. These restrictions more than likely contributed to PUD’s dismal repair response times.

“When incentives and discipline are considered the top concerns by both management and employees, there is a problem,” said Sherman. “Restrictive measures put in place through collective bargaining have handcuffed our city’s management and resulted in our best employees leaving for other opportunities. This needs to stop.”

Sherman urged staff to give management more leeway to reward good employees and discipline bad ones in the next round of collective bargaining.

The Audit Committee voted unanimously to forward the performance audit to the full City Council and for PUD to come back in 90 days for an update on improvements.

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