

# Development should be tied to water supply

Daily Breeze editorial

In a city whose government is consumed with expansion - densification! taller buildings! - Los Angeles City Councilman Dennis Zine seems to be alone in asking an obvious question: Do we have the water?

This isn't an academic inquiry. Earlier this month, a U.S. District Court judge ruled that, in the interest of protecting the endangered delta smelt, the state would need to start endangering Southern Californians by slashing water imports by as much as 30 percent. The ruling came after a historically dry winter, the likes of which meteorologists are predicting again for 2007-08.

Meanwhile, the city of Long Beach has issued mandatory rules on water use, and there's reason to think L.A. might eventually need to do the same. The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California has warned that mandatory rationing could become necessary for the first time in 16 years.

"We have a serious problem statewide, and before we get to mandatory rationing here, we need to know where we stand," says Zine, stating what should be, but isn't, the obvious in City Hall. "We need to look at all new developments, conversions and additions to make sure we have enough water."

He's right. You can't have a city without adequate water, and L.A.'s residents shouldn't have to endure draconian limits on their water usage just so developers can maximize their earnings by packing as many people into a project as possible.

But that reality seems to be lost on city leaders, who continue with L.A.'s backward, planless approach to growth, in which any developer can get a rubber stamp on any project, provided he or she has bought the support of the local council member.

Zine proposes that the Department of Water and Power, along with city planning and building agencies, review all new developments and additions to determine the effects on the water supply. That's a decent start, but he should go further.

**What L.A. really needs is a moratorium on future projects until it comes up with a sound plan for preparing for them.**