

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

California

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April 29, 2008

Nick Patsouras, Chairman of the Board
Los Angeles Department of Water and Power
Room 1555-H, 15th Floor
111 North Hope Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Honorable Chairman Patsouras:

The City of Los Angeles Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) has reviewed and discussed the issues presented to the BAC by the public concerning the restriction of bicyclist access to roadways during the Department of Water and Power's (DWP) annual Festival of Lights.

The BAC has also heard DWP's concerns about bicyclists sharing the roads during this festival and while we appreciate these concerns, we believe they are unfounded and not supported by statistics and even anecdotal evidence. The issue of safety seems to be the primary concern of the DWP. Testimony from bicyclists however, indicates that they are most concerned about the following:

1. The restriction of bicyclists rights to travel to and from desired destinations.
2. The restriction of users of non-polluting modes of transportation from enjoying the festival.
3. The perpetuation of the false perception that bicyclists and motor vehicles can not safely share the roads, especially at the slow, gridlocked speeds encountered during Festival of Lights.
4. The fact that motorists are given priority over bicyclists.

One of the purposes of the BAC is to advise Los Angeles City agencies regarding facilitating of the use of the bicycle as a means of transportation and recreation. Therefore, we advise and recommend that the DWP not discourage, limit or restrict bicycle usage on roadways at any time when motor vehicles are allowed during the Festival of Lights. It is further the view of the BAC that bicycles are part of traffic and should be treated equally as such. In addition, we also advise and recommend that DWP verbally notify drivers as they enter the Festival of Lights to drive safely and pay attention to all other users on the roadway, in particular bicyclists. We also encourage DWP to prepare a handout or brochure informing motorists that bicyclists have the same rights as motorists, take up less space, do not wear out roadways, conserve energy and emit no exhaust emissions. This brochure or handout can be included at minimal cost in DWP billing statements mailed to Los Angeles residents, and/or handed out to vehicle passengers as they enter the Festival of Lights.

Thank you for your consideration of bicyclists in future planning of the event. If you have additional questions or concerns please contact me directly at (818) 761-5576.

Sincerely,

Alex Baum
Chairman, Bicycle Advisory Committee

C: David Nahai, LADWP General Manager