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Councilman Perello's Statement Responding to the News that a Sufficient Number of Recall Petition Signatures Have Been Validated by the County Elections Division (December 30, 2017)

Yesterday afternoon, City Clerk Michelle Ascension notified members of the Oxnard City Council, including me, that a sufficient number of petition signatures on the Recall Petitions have been validated by the County Elections Division which will trigger a Recall election in the first half of 2018.

Hat's off to Mr. Starr for his tenacity in getting those signatures, but not for his lack of governance wisdom in unnecessarily forcing Oxnard taxpayers to pay for two City Council elections in the space of one year instead of one. (i.e. A Special City Council Recall election in April-May of 2018, as well as the regularly scheduled City Council election in November of 2018, less than five months later)

The upcoming Recall election will likely cost Oxnard's taxpayers a minimum of \$250,000, probably well over \$300,000, once the County Elections Division submits its final bill to the City for the cost of verifying Recall petition signatures.

Oxnard's Wastewater Utility collection, conveyance, and treatment system is nearing 70-years old. It's decrepit, and chock-full of serious public health, safety, and liability problems.

Past City elected officials and City Managers buried those problems, deferred critical maintenance, and failed to raise sewer rates in an adult, disciplined, and reasonable manner for far too many years.

Prior to the March 2016 rate increase approved by the current City Council, the Wastewater Utility was upside-down financially. The City was in serious jeopardy of bond-holders potentially calling up to \$100 Million in wastewater debt. The reason was that based on the lack of remedial actions taken by past City Councils and management, the City wasn't honoring the promises it made when that money was borrowed.

The most recent wastewater rates adopted by the City Council in May of 2017 that became effective on July 1, 2017 amounted to \$2.22 per month, or \$26.64 per year for a typical Oxnard household. At my strong urging, the City Council adopted an amendment I prepared creating a \$500,000 per year "lock-box" reserved solely for use in funding emergency wastewater utility repairs.

These wastewater rate increases were and are necessary to protect the City from potentially huge and damaging environmental regulatory fines, bond default, and expensive "environmental justice" liability lawsuit judgements.

During both my 2013 Special Election and 2014 Re-Election Council Campaigns, I made a pledge that the public health, safety, and welfare of ALL Oxnard residents, in ALL of Oxnard's more than 50 neighborhoods would be my HIGHEST PRIORITY as an Oxnard City Councilmember.

I intend to fight Mr. Starr's ill-advised and ill-timed Recall campaign with all the political strength that I can muster. And I renew my pledge to Oxnard residents, ratepayers, and voters, that for each and every day I continue to serve as an Oxnard City Councilmember, I will fight hard to do my best to advance the public health, safety, and welfare of ALL of Oxnard's 200,000+ residents, no matter what political, economic, or legal challenges may be.

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