

**SB 485 (Hernandez)**  
**Legislation to Authorize Sanitation Districts of**  
**Los Angeles County to Manage Stormwater**  
**Frequently Asked Questions**

Q. What would SB 485 do?

A. This legislation would authorize the county sanitation districts located in Los Angeles County to manage stormwater and dry weather runoff.

Q. What are the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County?

A. The Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County provide wastewater and solid waste services to over 5.5 million people in 78 cities and unincorporated areas in Los Angeles County. There are 24 separate sanitation districts, each with their own board of directors and own infrastructure, much of which is interconnected, but which are collectively served by one staff.

Q. Why is SB 485 needed? Why now?

A. All but two of the cities in Los Angeles County, unincorporated areas and the Los Angeles County Flood Control System are enrolled in municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) permits, the most recent of which were updated in late 2012 or early 2013. The new MS4 permits include more stringent requirements than previous MS4 permits, and groups of cities and the County have prepared or are currently preparing watershed or enhanced watershed management plans that describe how they intend to comply with their permit. As they face the challenges involved in complying with these permits, some cities have expressed interest in having the Sanitation Districts help them with stormwater and dry weather urban runoff projects. However, the Sanitation Districts do not currently have authority to manage or treat stormwater and dry weather urban runoff outside of the sewer system.

Q. Does this mean the Sanitation Districts will take stormwater into the existing wastewater system for treatment?

A. No, the wastewater system was not designed to convey and treat stormwater, and the volume would be too great for the existing pipes and treatment plants.

Q. Who will pay for the projects?

A. The city (or any other local agency) that requests the Sanitation Districts' help would pay the costs on a fee for service basis.

Q. Who will decide what projects to do?

A. The cities and County will identify the projects that are needed to comply with the MS4 permits, and the Sanitation Districts will respond to requests to assist with these projects.

Q. Doesn't this duplicate what other agencies already do? And won't this result in agencies fighting "turf battles?"

A. While the cities and County do have the authority to manage and treat stormwater and dry weather urban runoff, there may be instances where cities do not have the institutional capacity and would find it preferable to have the Sanitation Districts assist them. Also, because most cities are working in groups, the Sanitation Districts may be able to assist in projects that serve more than one city and avoid the need to create new joint powers agencies for this purpose. Moreover, before the Sanitation Districts can get involved in stormwater and dry weather urban

runoff projects outside of the wastewater system, it must apply to the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) for permission. Public hearings will be held and issues related to duplication of other agencies' services would be considered.

Q. Does this mean the Sanitation Districts will impose new stormwater fees?

A. The Sanitation Districts do not intend to adopt new stormwater fees.

Q. Can the Sanitation Districts raise funding for stormwater projects together with its wastewater fees?

A. No, the rules and process for adopting wastewater and stormwater fees are different, and dedicated fees must be adopted and managed separately.

Q. Will the projects the Sanitation Districts will do take water away from existing water rights holders?

A. No. There will be no impact on existing water rights and adjudications.

Q. What if a city doesn't want any help from the Sanitation Districts?

A. Participation is voluntary, and no local agency is required to participate in or pay for any projects under SB 485.