

COUNCIL AGENDA: 10/10/06

ITEM NO.: 1



## Memorandum

**TO:** City Council

**FROM:** Mayor Ron Gonzales

**SUBJECT:** Absence from the October 10  
Study Session

**DATE:** October 6, 2006

Approved

Date

10/6/06

I request an excused absence from the City Council Study Session on Heat Wave and Power Outage Plans recently scheduled for Tuesday evening, October 10, 2006. The recent scheduling of this study session on a day when the Council regular meeting is normally canceled due to a city holiday unfortunately conflicts with a prior personal commitment. Vice Mayor Cindy Chavez will chair the study session in my absence.

### *Power outage and emergency planning questions*

I have several questions that I ask Council and staff to consider during your deliberations on this matter:

- What prompted this study session on heat wave and power outage plans at this time, especially as we head into winter and may face our regular seasonal concerns such as potential flooding? What problems did we experience in San Jose during the period of extreme heat in July this year?
- How does this issue mesh with our other priorities for our emergency preparedness efforts and neighborhoods?
- How will PG&E, as our community's power supplier, along with state agencies responsible for energy regulatory oversight, participate in this study session and in the City's planning efforts, both on this issue and other weather-related power outages?

As I noted last week during the Council's long discussion about the status of the City's emergency preparedness planning, I am concerned about the amount of additional work the Council is asking from the Office of Emergency Services at a time when staff is burdened with significant challenges. This concern extends to the other departments that will be involved in this issue, such as the City Manager's Office, Fire, and Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services. We must be careful to balance staff resources with our most critical priorities.

*Additional agenda topics*

At our meeting this week, Council added several other items to the agenda for the October 10 special meeting unrelated to the original topic, including the discussion of a possible urgency ordinance regarding campaign contributions from independent committees, and possible Council positions on the propositions on the November state ballot.

Although I will not be able to attend this meeting, I do want to share my thoughts regarding the ballot measures. I agree with the staff recommendations on all the measures except for Proposition 89 regarding public financing of state election campaigns.

As I mentioned this Tuesday, I strongly support the concept of public financing of campaigns, and have proposed this for our local elections in San José. However, Proposition 89 proposes funding this with a new statewide tax on corporations, which I disagree with. Public financing of campaigns is most appropriately funded through the General Fund, because it is a common benefit for all Californians. We must be careful of special taxes that could negatively affect the state's economic competitiveness.

cc: City Manager, City Clerk, City Attorney