



AGENDA REPORT

Meeting Date: May 17, 2016

Item Number: F-2

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council

From: Cheryl Friedling, Deputy City Manager for Public Affairs

Subject: RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS IN SUPPORT OF AB 2844, CALIFORNIA COMBATING THE BOYCOTT, DIVESTMENT, AND SANCTIONS OF ISRAEL ACT OF 2016

Attachments:

1. Resolution
2. Correspondence to Assemblymember Cristina Garcia re AB 2844
3. September 1, 2015 Staff Report – Establishment of a Joint Declaration Between the City of Beverly Hills and the State of Israel
4. Memorandum from Shaw/Yoder/Antwih
5. News Articles

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council adopt the resolution entitled "RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS IN SUPPORT OF AB 2844, CALIFORNIA COMBATING THE BOYCOTT, DIVESTMENT, AND SANCTIONS OF ISRAEL ACT OF 2016."

INTRODUCTION

Assembly Bill 2844, introduced by Assemblyman Richard Bloom (D-Santa Monica), prohibits a public entity from contracting with a company that is engaging in discriminatory business practices in furtherance of a boycott of any sovereign nation or peoples recognized by the government of the United States, including, but not limited to, the nation of Israel. AB 2844 would require the State Attorney General's office to develop a list of companies that it determines to be engaging in such discriminatory practices in furtherance of such a boycott and to post this list on its website. If signed into law, AB 2844 would prohibit a company that is

identified on the list from bidding on, submitting a proposal, or entering into (or renewing) a contract with the state and local entities for \$10,000 or more.

DISCUSSION

California and Israel have established business partnerships and trade relations with each other that have enhanced the agricultural, educational, energy, entertainment, medical, scientific and environmental policies in California, Israel and throughout the United States. On March 5, 2014, Governor Jerry Brown and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu signed a memorandum of understanding to develop joint projects and conduct mutually beneficial research in California and Israel. In July 2015, the State Legislature adopted Senate Concurrent Resolution 25 to affirm its support for the memorandum of understanding.

The City Council of Beverly Hills entered into a cooperative agreement with Israel in September 2015, when the City Council approved the establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Beverly Hills and Israel. This strategic partnership enables joint innovation, research and economic development to achieve collaboration in key sectors. These include water conservation, clean energy technology, arts and culture and others.

The City's Legislative Committee reviewed and endorsed AB 2844, and sent a letter to Assemblymember Cristina Garcia (Chair of the Assembly Accountability and Administrative Review Committee) on April 11, 2016.

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

Cheryl Friedling, Deputy City Manager
Approved By



Attachment 1

RESOLUTION NO. 16-R-_____

RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS IN SUPPORT OF AB 2844, CALIFORNIA COMBATING THE BOYCOTT, DIVESTMENT, AND SANCTIONS OF ISRAEL ACT OF 2016

WHEREAS, in 2016, the Mayor and City Council signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the State of Israel for strategic partnerships for joint innovation, exchanges, and cooperation between Beverly Hills and Israel; and

WHEREAS, partnerships between Beverly Hills and Israel have supported innovation across California, Israel, and the rest of the United States in a wide variety of areas including water conservation and cybersecurity; and

WHEREAS, furthermore, the MOU envisioned these partnerships to encourage mutual cooperation and understanding that could be leveraged to foster peace and democracy in the Middle East; and

WHEREAS, boycotts of Israel by companies doing business in California undermine cultural, academic, and economic cooperation between California and Israel; and

WHEREAS, currently pending before the California State Assembly is a bill, AB 2844, as amended (Bloom), the “California Combating the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions of Israel Act of 2016”. This legislation would prohibit a public entity from entering into a contract for \$10,000 or more on or after January 1, 2017, to acquire or dispose of goods, services, information technology, or for construction, if the contracting company is engaging in discriminatory business practices in furtherance of a boycott of any sovereign nation or peoples recognized by the government of the United States, including, but not limited to, the nation of Israel; and

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS DOES HEREBY RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The City of Beverly Hills hereby supports AB 2844, as amended, (Bloom), the “California Combating the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions of Israel Act of 2016,” which would prohibit a public entity from entering into a contract for \$10,000 or more with a company that is engaging in discriminatory business practices in furtherance of a boycott of any sovereign nation or peoples recognized by the government of the United States, including, but not limited to, the nation of Israel.

Section 2. The City Clerk shall certify to the adoption of this resolution and shall cause this resolution and his certification to be entered in the Book of Resolutions of the Council of this City.

Adopted:

JOHN A. MIRISCH
Mayor of the City of Beverly Hills,
California

ATTEST:

(SEAL)
BYRON POPE
City Clerk

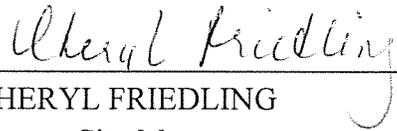
APPROVED AS TO FORM:



LAURENCE S. WIENER
City Attorney

APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:

MAHDI ALUZRI
City Manager



CHERYL FRIEDLING
Deputy City Manager

Attachment 2



CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS

455 NORTH REXFORD DRIVE • BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA 90210

John A. Mirisch, Mayor

April 11, 2016

The Honorable Cristina Garcia
Assembly Accountability and Administrative Review Committee
State Capitol, Room 2013
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 2844 (Bloom): Public contracts: California Combating the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions of Israel Act of 2016.
City of Beverly Hills – SUPPORT**

Dear Chair Garcia,

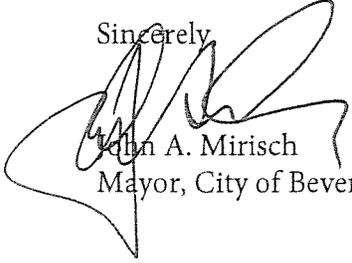
On behalf of the City of Beverly Hills, I am pleased to write to you in **SUPPORT** of **AB 2844 (Bloom)**, which would prohibit a public entity from entering into a contract with a company that is participating in the boycott of Israel. If, within 90 days of being notified by a public entity, a company takes substantial action to cease its boycott of Israel, then that company will not be subject to contracting prohibitions. The bill would also require the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GoBiz) to incentivize business and academic collaboration, trade, and partnership between Israel and California and to disincentive barriers hindering those activities.

In 2014, the Governor of California and the Prime Minister of Israel signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for strategic partnerships for joint innovation, exchanges, and cooperation between California and Israel. This MOU was reaffirmed with the passage of last year's SCR 25 (Block). **AB 2844 (Bloom)** seeks to ensure that these state agreements and goals are not undermined by contracts with companies that are boycotting Israel. Certain contracts, including those under \$10,000 and those for matters that are necessary for the public entity to perform its functions, and that are unable to be obtained elsewhere, would be exempted from this bill.

The United States and Israel have a unique bond based on shared values reflected in the virtues and principles of freedom and democracy, and have stood together as allies since the rebirth of the modern State of Israel. **AB 2844 (Bloom)** reaffirms California's commitment to long established business partnerships and trade relations with Israel, which have mutually enhanced the agricultural, educational, energy, entertainment, health, medical, scientific, and water sectors in California, Israel and the United States.

For these reasons, the City of Beverly Hills **SUPPORTS AB 2844 (Bloom)**. Thank you for considering this important measure.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John A. Mirisch". The signature is stylized and overlaps the printed name below it.

John A. Mirisch
Mayor, City of Beverly Hills

cc: Members and Consultants, Assembly Accountability and Administrative Review Committee
The Honorable Ben Allen, 26th Senate District
The Honorable Richard Bloom, 50th Assembly District
Andrew K. Antwih, Shaw / Yoder / Antwih, Inc.

Attachment 3



AGENDA REPORT

Meeting Date: September 1, 2015
Item Number: D-11
To: Honorable Mayor & City Council
From: Cheryl Friedling, Deputy City Manager
Kevin Kearney, Senior Management Analyst
Subject: ESTABLISHMENT OF A JOINT DECLARATION BETWEEN THE
CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS AND STATE OF ISRAEL
Attachments: 1. Joint Declaration on Joint Innovation, Exchanges and
Cooperation between the City of Beverly Hills and the
Consulate General of the State of Israel in California

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council adopt the Joint Declaration between the City of Beverly Hills and the State of Israel.

INTRODUCTION

The State of Israel, through its Consulate General in Los Angeles, had approached the City of Beverly Hills and requested a partnership between the State and the City. During the May 18, 2015 City Council meeting, the Council requested that Staff move forward with drafting a Joint Declaration with the State of Israel.

DISCUSSION

The Joint Declaration with the State of Israel promotes and strengthens bilateral collaboration, economic development, and enhances cultural relationships and educational opportunities. Pursuant to the Council's direction, this Joint Declaration will focus on the following sectors:

1. Water Conservation & Management
2. Technology & Cyber Security
3. Public Health
4. Emergency Services & Disaster Preparedness
5. Public Safety & Counter-Terrorism
6. Art & Culture

Meeting Date: September 1, 2015

Through this partnership, the City of Beverly Hills and the State of Israel are encouraged to coordinate dialogue, information exchanges and initiatives related to these sectors. The Joint Declaration promotes mutual cooperation, understanding and friendships by encouraging ad hoc task forces, trade delegations and professional exchanges. The Joint Declaration also encourages the collaboration between the two participants' educational and cultural institutions, and encourages the strengthening of the Beverly Hills - Herzliya sister city program.

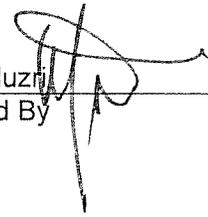
It should be noted that the programs and initiatives that are developed through this Joint Declaration shall not conflict with any other programs or initiatives under the jurisdiction of the City of Beverly Hills or any state or federal agencies.

The signing event for this Joint Declaration will take place on Tuesday, November 10, 2015 during the *Duet Gala*, featuring the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, at the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts.

FISCAL IMPACT

Currently, there is no fiscal impact, as specific proposals have not been selected. Any future impact will be brought back with the corresponding initiative(s) to the Council.

Mahdi Aluzri
Approved By

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mahdi Aluzri', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and extends above and below the line.

Attachment 1

Joint Declaration

On

Joint Innovation, Exchanges and Cooperation

Between

The City of Beverly Hills, California, United States of America

And

The Consulate General of the State of Israel in California

THE CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL IN CALIFORNIA AND THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA (HEREINAFTER REFERRED TO AS THE "PARTICIPANTS") RECOGNIZE THAT:

Whereas, two-way trade between Israel and California totaled over \$4.2 billion in 2014 – one of the largest two-way trade relationships between Israel and a U.S. State; and,

Whereas, the City of Beverly Hills and the State of Israel share close ties and mutual interest in water conservation and management, alternative energy, public safety and counter-terrorism, and other technology-based industry sectors.

THEREFORE, The Participants declare their intention to promote and strengthen bilateral collaboration, economic development, and enhance cultural relationships and educational opportunities resulting from joint initiatives.

To achieve these aims:

1. The Participants may support and encourage partnerships between Israel and Beverly Hills in key sectors (hereinafter “Shared Sectors”) including, but not limited to:
 - a. Water Conservation & Management
 - b. Technology & Cyber Security
 - c. Public Health
 - d. Emergency Services & Disaster Preparedness
 - e. Public Safety & Counter-Terrorism
 - f. Art & Culture
2. The Participants may convene working groups and open forums to coordinate dialogue, information exchanges, and initiatives related to the Shared Sectors.
3. The Participants may support and encourage their residents, experts and relevant authorities to further develop interpersonal contacts and exchanges, and to promote mutual cooperation, understanding, and friendship by encouraging ad hoc task forces, trade delegations, and professional exchanges related to Shared Sectors.
4. The Participants may support and encourage the strengthening of the Beverly Hills – Herzliya sister city program, which is designed to enhance opportunities for cultural and educational exchanges, economic partnerships, and social entrepreneurship on the local level.
5. The Participants may encourage collaboration between Israeli and Beverly Hills educational and cultural institutions.
6. The Participants may meet at a mutually convenient time to establish a plan in support of the implementation of this partnership, and thereafter may meet annually to assess and revise the plan.
7. The Participants may jointly prepare an annual report recounting the progress and achievements as well as suggestions for future enhancements to the cooperation.

8. The programs or initiatives related to this Joint Declaration shall not supersede or conflict with programs or initiatives under the jurisdiction of the City of Beverly Hills or any state or federal agencies.
9. This Joint Declaration does not create any legally binding rights or obligations for either Participant.

Declared in Beverly Hills on the _____ day of _____ 2015, which corresponds to the _____ day of ____ of 577_, in the Hebrew calendar.

CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE STATE OF
ISRAEL IN CALIFORNIA,

CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS,
a municipal corporation

DAVID SIEGEL
Consul General of Israel
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, State of Israel

JULIAN A. GOLD, M.D.
Mayor of the City of Beverly Hills, California
United States of America

ATTEST:

_____ (SEAL)
BYRON POPE
City Clerk of the City of Beverly Hills, California
United States of America

Attachment 4



SHAW/YODER/ANTWIH, *inc.*
LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY • ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT

April 26, 2016

To: Cheryl Friedling, Deputy City Manager
City of Beverly Hills

From: Andrew K. Antwih, Partner
Christopher Castrillo, Legislative Advocate
Melissa Immel, Legislative Aide
Shaw / Yoder / Antwih, Inc.

Re: Update on AB 2844 (Bloom) – Public contracts: California Combating the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions of Israel Act of 2016.

Brief Summary: Assembly Member Bloom is authoring AB 2844, which would, beginning January 1, 2017, prohibit a public entity (state or local) from contracting with a company that is participating in the discriminatory business practices in furtherance of a boycott of a sovereign nation or peoples recognized by the government of the United States, including, but not limited to, the State of Israel. The bill would require the Attorney General to develop a list of companies it determines are engaging in a boycott of Israel. The bill contains additional provisions.

Status: This bill is currently pending in the Assembly Appropriations Committee where the fiscal implications will be considered. It has not yet been set for a hearing date.

History: This bill has been heard in two policy committees to date: the Assembly Accountability and Administrative Review Committee and the Assembly Judiciary Committee. The bill passed out of the Assembly Accountability and Administrative Review Committee on April 13th on a 5-1 vote, with 3 members abstaining. The bill passed out of the Assembly Judiciary Committee on April 19th on a 10-0 vote.

Support and Opposition Arguments: This bill has a long list of both Support and Opposition and the debate on this issue has been highly contentious in both committee hearings. We have provided a list of the Support and Opposition as an attachment to this memo. A brief summary of the arguments from both sides is provided below.

In support of the bill, The Jewish Public Affairs Committee of California has stressed that the BDS movement seeks to damage the important relationship between California and Israel but adds that, in addition to this, the BDS movement seeks to *"demonize and isolate Israel on our campuses, in our communities, and on the world stage."*¹ In his testimony, Asm. Bloom has further stated that *"BDS does not further efforts to negotiate a lasting peace for the people of Israel and the Palestinians, but rather seeks to isolate one party rather than build trust and goodwill between both. BDS efforts are intent on harming public opinion and delegitimizing Israel."*²

¹ Assembly Judiciary Committee Analysis, 4/17/16

² Assembly Judiciary Committee Hearing, 4/19/16

Many others have voiced their opposition to the legislation. Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) argues *"in the guise of expressing concern for purported discriminatory practices affecting Israel, the true agenda for this bill is to shield Israel from growing criticism of its policies and from nonviolent measures taken to express and make meaningful that criticism."*³ JVP has also stated that bill's mechanisms for identifying the blacklisted companies and implementing the measure are *"impossibly vague, and enforcement would therefore be capricious and arbitrary."*

JVP and others, such as the ACLU, have also cited that several court cases have held that *"boycotts are protected speech and therefore must be accorded the highest level of First Amendment protection."*⁴ The ACLU has concerns that this bill would penalize constitutionally protected political speech. In response to the first amendment concerns, Asm. Bloom has worked with the Assembly Judiciary Committee to work out some amendments which we describe below.

Amendments and Next Steps: Assembly Member Bloom has taken a few amendments that have been recommended by the Judiciary Committee as they relate to potential concerns that the provisions of the bill may violate the First Amendment. References to *"boycott against Israel"* have been replaced with *"discriminatory business practices in furtherance of a boycott of a sovereign nation or peoples recognized by the government of the United States, including, but not limited to, the State of Israel"* which is a broader definition that is more likely to meet First Amendment muster.

SYA has been advocating in Support of this legislation on behalf of the City. Assembly Member Bloom has asked SYA to meet with him and his staff to discuss potential amendments he may take in advance of the Assembly Appropriations Committee and strategize on next steps. That meeting will take place this week and we will report back to the City on the results and potential follow ups

³ Assembly Judiciary Committee Analysis, 4/17/16

⁴ Assembly Judiciary Committee Analysis, 4/17/16

Support

30 Years After
Agudath Israel of California
Alpha Epsilon Pi Fraternity, Inc.
Alpha Epsilon Pi, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo
Alpha Epsilon Pi, Chapman University
Alpha Epsilon Pi, Claremont Colleges
Alpha Epsilon Pi, CSU, Chico
Alpha Epsilon Pi, CSU, Fullerton
Alpha Epsilon Pi, CSU, Northridge
Alpha Epsilon Pi, CSU, San Jose
Alpha Epsilon Pi, UC Berkeley
Alpha Epsilon Pi, UC Davis
Alpha Epsilon Pi, UC Irvine
Alpha Epsilon Pi, UCLA
Alpha Epsilon Pi, UC Riverside
Alpha Epsilon Pi, UC Santa Cruz
Alpha Epsilon Pi, UC Santa Barbara
Alpha Epsilon Pi, UC San Diego
Alpha Epsilon Pi, San Diego State University
Alpha Epsilon Pi, San Francisco State University
American Jewish Committee
California Teamsters Public Affairs Council
The City of Beverly Hills
Chabad of San Diego State University
Democrats for Israel Los Angeles
Israeli-American Council
Israeli-American Nexus
Jewish Public Affairs Committee of California
Simon Wiesenthal Center
StandWithUs

Opposition

American Muslims for Palestine, various chapters
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
American Friends Service Committee
American Muslims for Palestine
Arab American Civic Council
Arab American Cultural Center of Silicon Valley
Arab Resource and Organizing Center, SF Bay Area
Bay Area Women in Black
BDS-LA for Justice in Palestine
Bill of Rights Defense Committee
Center for Constitutional Rights
Council on American Islamic Relations, California
California Democratic Party, Arab American Caucus

Chico Palestine Action Group
Coalition of Palestinian American Organizations
Cognitive Liberty
Culture and Conflict Forum
Defending Dissent Foundation
Davis Committee for Palestinian Rights
East Timor Action Network
Episcopal Peace Fellowship, Palestine Israel Network
Friends Committee on Legislation, California
Friends of Sabeel North America
Free Palestine Movement
If Americans Knew
International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network (IJAN)
International Solidarity Movement, Northern California
Islah Reparations Project
Islamic Shura Council of Southern California
Israel/Palestine Task Force of the California Nevada Conference of United Methodists
Jewish Voice for Peace, various chapters
Justice for Palestinians, San Jose
Kairos USA
Keep Hope Alive -- Bay Area Presbyterians
LA Jews for Peace
Middle East Peace Task Force, Southwest California Synod,
Evangelical Lutheran Church
National Lawyers Guild, various chapters
North Coast Coalition for Palestine
Northern California Islamic Council
Our Developing World
Palestine American Congress
Palestine American League
Palestine Israel Action Committee
Palestine-Israel Working Group of Nevada County
Palestine Legal
Palestine Political Action Committee
Palestinian American Women's Association
Palestinian Youth Movement-USA
Peace Action of San Mateo Co.
Peninsula Peace and Justice Center
People for Palestinian-Israeli Justice
Petaluma Progressives
Pilgrims of Ibillin
Queers Undermining Israeli Terrorism
Ramallah Club of San Jose
Rebuilding Alliance
Resource Center for Non-Violence, Santa Cruz
Sacramento Regional Coalition for Palestinian Rights
San Jose Peace and Justice Center
Social Justice Center of Marin

Students for Justice in Palestine, various chapters
Sustainable Agriculture Water and Health (SAWAH)
Syria Solidarity Movement
UAW 2865 Joint Council/Executive Board
Unitarian Universalists for Justice in the Middle East
United Church of Christ Palestine Israel Network
United Methodist Kairos Response
U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation
U.S. Palestinian Community Network
Veterans for Peace, Chapter 87, Sacramento
Voices for Justice in Palestine, Rossmoor, Walnut Creek
Washington Interfaith Alliance for Middle East Peace
Wellstone Progressive Democrats of Sacramento
Women's International League for Peace & Freedom, various chapters
14 Friends of Palestine, Marin County
Several individual letters and e-mails

Attachment 5

Proud partners: Beverly Hills and Israel

“The City of Beverly Hills will reaffirm to the world that we cherish the State of Israel and everything it stands for,” says mayor.



The Beverly Hills City Council adopted a joint declaration establishing a formal partnership with Israel last month. It will include an exchange of ideas and resources on a broad array of areas such as water conservation and management, technology and cyber security, public health, emergency services, disaster preparedness, public safety, counter terrorism, art and culture.

“This partnership will allow us to further strengthen our commitment to Israel,” said Mayor Julian Gold. “Beverly Hills will greatly benefit from Israel’s leadership in many areas that are of great concern and interest to our community.”

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Beverly Hills partners with Israel in water conservation solutions

by Aron Chilewich
Posted on Jun. 17, 2015 at 2:36 pm

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Councilmember Blumenfeld shakes hands with Jacob Segal of the Southern California Israel Chamber of Commerce (SCICC), following the unanimous vote in favor of establishing the Los Angeles/Eilat Innovation and Cooperation Task Force in 2014. Photo courtesy of Councilmember Blumenfeld

As California enters yet another summer of drought, Southland water authorities developing long-term conservation plans are turning to Israel to learn about new technologies. A recently announced partnership between Israel and the city of Beverly Hills follows the second meeting of an economic cooperation and innovation task force between the city of Los Angeles and its Israeli sister city, Eilat.

Both of these cooperative arrangements are under the umbrella of a March 2014 agreement signed by California Gov. Jerry Brown and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. It calls for the two economies to "foster economic cooperation and economic development" and to "facilitate joint industrial research and development," in a variety of economic sectors, including water conservation and management.

"The State of Israel has always been a leader in water conservation technology, recycling and reusing wastewater, and the city of Beverly

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Hills hopes to learn from these technologies to assist with our region's drought challenges," Beverly Hills Interim City Manager Mandi Aluzri wrote in an email to the Journal.

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The agreement, Aluzri said, would extend beyond water and include cybersecurity, public health and disaster preparedness, among other mutual interests. The language of the Beverly Hills-Israel partnership is still being written, though a final agreement is expected this summer.

In Beverly Hills, "We are hoping to bring some Israeli technology to the table, and to help them create efficiencies in their system to help conserve water," said Dillon Hosier, political adviser to Consul General of Israel in Los Angeles David Siegel. In addition to large-capital projects, creating efficiencies can also mean implementing new, relatively cheap best practices, including new leak-detection technology, Hosier said.

Although a similar agreement established a year ago between Eilat and Los Angeles has so far focused on information exchange on water practices, L.A. City officials expect the arrangement to result in the actual implementation of new technologies.

"The [Los Angeles-Eilat] task force is still in its early stages," said a spokesperson for City Councilmember Bob Blumenfield, who is spearheading the effort. As a state legislator, Blumenfield authored legislation on which the agreement between California and Israel is based.

At the first meeting of the Los Angeles-Eilat task force in October 2014, Los Angeles City officials heard a presentation from prominent Israeli hydrologist Eilon Adar on how Israel has overcome water scarcity using sustainable technologies.

In Israel, as in California, the agricultural sector is the largest consumer of water. To mitigate the burden of agriculture on its national water system, Israel has retired open field cultivation, widely used across California, in favor of drip irrigation systems, which use significantly less water.

Israel is also widely considered a world leader in sewage treatment and reclamation, and seawater desalination — the focus of the second meeting of the Los Angeles-Eilat task force, which took place at the Milken Global Conference in April.

Although more than half of all water used by Israeli households, industry and agriculture is artificially produced through desalination and wastewater recycling, the city of Los Angeles currently sources just 1 percent of its overall water supply from recycled water, according to figures from the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.

These discussions occur as cities across the Southland are under pressure to greatly reduce water use in the coming year, the effect of Brown's order that the state cut overall urban use by 25 percent. To comply with this order, the State Water Resources Control Board has

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asked Beverly Hills to cut its water use by 36 percent. The city of Los Angeles' goal is a 16 percent reduction. Both of these cuts are based on an assessment of average per-capita water use between July and September of last year.

Although Brown's order has drawn the public's attention to the state's immediate need for a reduction in water use — including an increased focus on the exorbitant amount of water Californians use to water lawns and fill pools — municipalities across the state are setting their sites on more permanent solutions.

Some California cities already have begun experimenting with desalination technology, controversial among environmental experts because of its ecological footprint, high cost and energy intensiveness. Israeli firm IDE Technologies designed a desalination plant in Carlsbad, which is set to open next year. It will be the largest desalination facility in the country, and by 2020 it is expected to satisfy 7 percent of the San Diego County's water needs.

The city of Santa Barbara also is in talks with IDE Technologies as it plans to bring its desalination plant back online for the first time since 1992. Other plants around the state are in various stages of planning, including one in Huntington Beach that has drawn criticism from the California Coastal Commission and Orange County Coastkeeper.

Proposition 1, passed by California voters last year, was touted by supporters as an important first step by the state government in shifting the region toward sustainable water sources. It will raise more than \$7 billion for a variety of projects, including water storage, ecosystem and watershed protection, and water recycling. The first allocations of funds are expected in the next several months, after which "a path for Israel will become clearer," Hosier said.

For now, sustainability advocates in Los Angeles are developing preliminary plans for a coordinated pilot project focused on groundwater recharge, said Blumenfield's spokesperson. (Groundwater recharge is the artificial reintroduction of treated water into the ground.) And officials are continuing to share information.

In Beverly Hills, the direction of the cooperation agreement is contingent on the recommendations of a 10-year water enterprise plan currently being developed. A report on the plan, presented to the Beverly Hills City Council in May, recommended that the city explore water supply alternatives such as water banking, the development of new wells, and reduced water purchases from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

"As we begin implementing these projects, through our partnership with Israel," Aluzri wrote, "we hope to gain access to best practices and other expertise in the field."

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- Dustin Hoffman breaks down on 'Finding Your Roots' after discovering his Jewish history | Hollywood
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