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The Six Month Mark: Three Ways Mayor Filner is Making a Difference in San Diego

by [Doug Porter](#) on May 28, 2013 · [1 comment](#)

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By Doug Porter



Three stories about San Diego Mayor Bob Filner lead off this morning's review of the news. I'm not surprised that the first six months of Bob Filner's tenure as the top elected official in America's Finest City have been tumultuous.

After all, San Diegans elected a progressive Democrat after years of rule by mostly moderate Republicans. The local GOP leadership opted to back a more radical flavor of conservative in Carl DeMaio and, as a result, lost.

That's been a bitter pill for them to swallow, and you could hardly characterize them as gracious losers. And, in a way, you can hardly blame them. Losing the election has cost their supporters the kind of insider access needed to assure that their financial interests take priority over public concerns.

The *UT-San Diego* has run (nearly) weekly editorials, bleating about one (often imagined) offense after another. The city's hoteliers, acted as a proxy for the entire downtown-first gang, engaged in a protracted tantrum, and threatened to ruin San Diego's tourism economy unless they were given unfettered access to tax revenues (er, fees) to spend as they saw fit.

And the nattering nabobs of negativism in the local 2012 losers' circle have been desperately trying to float the idea of funding a recall of Mayor Filner, despite the long odds against success and the high probability of, according to a [Voice of San Diego](#) story, "a brutal five- to eight-month process that will consume untold millions of public and private dollars and grind municipal government to a chaotic halt."

There are three little stories in today's news providing substance to the argument that, at last, we have a Mayor who gives a damn about what people in this city actually want.

Filner Gives a Sh*t

Or at least he cares about the bird poop plaguing La Jolla. The Mayor has issued an "Emergency Finding" under the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 stating that the La Jolla bird waste is a public health hazard that threatens public health, safety and welfare.

Rather than turn this issue into an opportunity to complain about odious government regulations and the wild-eyed environmentalists that run this state, Filner simply researched the rules and came up with a solution.

From [NBC San Diego 7News](#):

On Friday evening, Filner announced that a plan for solving the [La Jolla odor issues](#) would be put in place following the Memorial Day weekend.

Filner says he's been working closely with San Diego City councilmember Sherri Lightner on this matter.

The pair has now been told by regulatory agencies that the city can begin implementing a plan that will neutralize the chemicals and organisms – including the overwhelming bird guano – causing the stench permeating the air around the cliffs east of La Jolla Cove.

The Streets Belong to the People



This town has been car-centric for so long that it's ridiculous. Some of you may have noticed small but significant changes around various streets of San Diego, changes designed to give some recognition to bicyclists.

Today Filner held a press conference at the intersection of Montezuma Road and Collwood Boulevard in the College Area. In 2012, a man was killed in an accident at the intersection. Along with the leaders of BikeSD and the San Diego County Bicycle Coalition, Filner officially unveiled a new project and announced more details of what's to come in plans to make shared roads a reality in San Diego.

Green lanes, meant to slow drivers down and make them more aware of the shared road are already in place at several different intersections including Balboa Avenue and Genessee Avenue, along Nimitz Boulevard in Point Loma, along Harbor Drive in front of the Convention Center.

The Mayor has lent city support for CicloSDias, an August 11th event modeled after the very successful Ciclovías events that started in Bogotá, Colombia over thirty years ago as a response to the congestion and pollution of city streets. For one day selected city streets in various neighborhoods throughout

central San Diego will be car free, with activities along the route, shops and restaurants open for business and neighbors and friends from all over coming together to make the streets come alive.

Doors *Are* Opening at City Hall

Some folks in the local media seem to have taken up the sport of tracking Filner's foibles, of which we'd guess there must be a few. Apparently he's hard to work for, as the departure of several staff members over the past months would indicate. It's taken too long for his PR department to get up to a standard that keeps local reporters satisfied. And he can be curt, a real sonofabitch who doesn't suffer fools gladly.

But then there's [this article](#) in the *San Diego City Beat*, about how environmentalists finally have meaningful access to City Hall.

Environmental-justice leader Diane Takvorian is finally being heard

In June 2012, environmentalist Nicole Capretz met with aides to then-San Diego Mayor Jerry Sanders to talk about the Quail Brush power plant proposed for near Mission Trails Regional Park. Sanders' chief of staff, Julie Dubick, and senior policy advisor Aimee Faucett listened to her concerns about how the plant should be a sustainable-energy project that doesn't burn fossil fuels.

Later that month, news broke about another possible project, the North City Power Plant in University City. The city had been working for more than 16 months with one bidder, and city staff had compiled a 206-page report on the project. Capretz says Sanders' aides didn't even bother to mention it during their meeting.

...

Ever since gold-rusher and businessman Alonzo Horton set up New Town along San Diego's harbor in the 19th century, the city has been focused on improvements within 20 blocks of the waterfront, San Diego Mesa College political-science professor Carl Luna says. But Filner's approach seems to shift away from a Downtown mentality. Takvorian says the mayor's recently released budget proposal is one of the first times a mayor has highlighted community plans. When Filner developed a formal vision for

the Port of San Diego, which was presented to the city earlier this year, he wanted input before finalizing it, Takvorian said. So EHC [Environmental Health Coalition] offered strategies about how to make the port freer of diesel pollution. Takvorian says that kind of planning was groundbreaking, and even though her organization has monitored the port for more than 20 years, no city official has taken that kind of initiative.

Boxer Calls for San Onofre Investigation

[Southern California Public Radio](#) is up with a story this morning about San Onofre, about possible wrong-doing at the still shuttered nuclear power plant. It was closed in January 2012, after a small radiation leak led to the discovery of unusually rapid wear inside hundreds of tubes that carry radioactive water in the nearly new generators.

U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer wants the Justice Department to investigate if California utility executives deceived federal regulators about an equipment swap at the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS) that eventually led to a radiation leak, The Associated Press has learned.

The California Democrat obtained a 2004 internal letter written by a senior [Southern California Edison](#) executive that she said “leads me to believe that Edison intentionally misled the public and regulators” to avoid a potentially long and costly review of four replacement steam generators before they went into service.

On This Day: 1892 – The Sierra club was organized in San Francisco, CA. **1957** – National League club owners voted to allow the Brooklyn Dodgers to move to Los Angeles and that the New York Giants could move to San Francisco. **1979** – The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund held a news conference to announce plans for a memorial honoring those who served in the war.

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Doug Porter

Doug Porter graduated from Point Loma High in 1968 and was active in the early days of the alternative press in San Diego, contributing to the OB Liberator, the print version of the OB Rag, the San Diego Door, and the San Diego Street Journal. He went on to have a 35 year career in the Hospitality business and decided to go back into raising hell when he retired. He is a cancer survivor and lives in North Park. He cares about education, rock-n-roll, good food and local politics!

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Dianne [May 28, 2013 at 2:26 pm](#)

Thanks, Doug. There is always a need for more hell raisers and you're a good one!

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