

News Report

LA Mayor Eric Garcetti Warns Violators of COVID-19 Health Orders of Power and Water Shut Off

BY EDWARD LOCKE

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L.A. Mayor Eric Garcetti held a press conference Wednesday, in Lincoln Park, at the COVID-19 testing site, to discuss relevant issues, and warned violators of health orders, i.e., residents hosting large, illegal gatherings or parties, of water and power shut-off.

“Tonight, I am authorizing the city to shut off Los Angeles Department of Water and Power service in the egregious cases in which houses, businesses and other venues are hosting unpermitted large gatherings. Starting on Friday night if the LAPD responds and verifies that a large gathering is occurring at a property and we see these properties re-offending time and time again, they will provide notice and initiate the process to request that DWP shut off service within the next 48 hours,” announced Garcetti, explaining how everything Angelenos are doing, individually and collectively, contributed to reduce infections, hospitalizations, and deaths; “But all the sacrifices can be undone by those who refuse to follow the science and who refuse to follow the rules and put our economy and our community at risk.” Garcetti reiterated the city’s health orders that prohibited “large parties and gatherings” outside of households and required six-foot minimal social distance with mask covering, and he clarified the extent of his new order: “To be clear, while we hope that you will avoid gatherings of all sizes, this enforcement is not focused on small and ordinary gatherings in people’s homes. These are focused on the people determined to break the rules, posing significant public dangers and a threat to all of us. Some research has shown that 10% of people cause 80% of the spread.”

“We’re seeing some good news in the last two weeks. Today is really to celebrate also what we have achieved together... as a city in the toughest of times.” Garcetti explained the achievements made in L.A. in combating COVID-19, including filling a national void in building testing program and infrastructure from the ground up, crossing 1 million test milestone at four locations across the city, “using an innovative swab test from a new company called Curative that freed up medical professionals to staff hospitals instead of administer tests and sparing Angelenos the discomfort of a nasal test.” Garcetti also mentioned how L.A. addressed “gaps in our infrastructure and reach the most vulnerable Angelenos,” that “COVID-19 was disproportionately affecting.” i.e., African and Latino communities, with four times testing added at the Crenshaw site, bringing down the death rate of African Americans “from almost double their population to under the population,” making L.A. “the first city to erase that race gap.” Garcetti mentioned that in the Latino community, L.A. is “putting resources and CORE has scaled their response here in Lincoln Park testing site to meet more residents in need;” and that L.A. is “the first city in America

to mandate monthly testing, go to all 135 places to make sure that testing was happening and where it wasn't to provide them with the tests.”

For the issue of homelessness, Garcetti mentioned L.A.'s endeavors in bringing test to Skid Row and other places where Angelenos experiencing homelessness, including camps and shelters, “to make sure that the positivity rate among people experiencing homelessness is lower than those of us that are housed, and working with Curative to pilot kiosks for COVID testing that can each test up to 500 people a day.” In addition to testing, L.A.'s efforts in solving homelessness problem included cleanups around homeless camping sites, in San Pedro, and around other bridge camping sites, providing housing with hotel and motel rooms to more than 4,000 people.

Regarding economic assistance to the needy during COVID-19 pandemic, Garcetti expressed his support for “cash payments to Americans for a second round” and “universal basic income that would guarantee that every month until this pandemic ends for Americans,” and his efforts in pushing “for a national coalition for universal basic income” with a group of mayors, such as Michael Tubbs of Stockton, to realize this dream. In addition, Garcetti mentioned state government's policies for protection of renters who cannot afford to pay rents, such as “a moratorium, not just on evictions, but on any eviction proceedings in courts in California” signed by the Governor, free legal aid program that will defend tenants from illegal evictions, and the rental assistance program in L.A., the largest in the United States, with 200,000 applicants, and 100,000 among them qualified.

According to Garcetti, L.A. is “offering more tests than ever before, 18,500 a day at eight city testing sites,” and “same-day appointments ready and a regular turnaround time of 23 to 30 hours.” Testing is free and insurance is not allowed by law to charge for any copay, deductible, or any cost for testing. Garcetti cited other statistics to indicate the outcomes of the city's anti-COVID-19 campaign. “Importantly, hospitalizations are decreasing actually down by about 20% since our peak, nearly 500 fewer Angelenos in our hospital because of COVID-19 than before. Yesterday, we had 1,741 people that was down from just 1,904 on Friday. Our peak was 2,232 on July 18th... this is more than a 20% drop. And as of yesterday, 508 of those were ICU patients who are severely sick of 5.9% decrease in the last month and a 7.6% decrease from last week.” He added that “today we have 200,000 N95 masks available for our first responders. 20,000 masks were handed out this weekend by LAPD officers in Hollywood and Pacific division to help people comply with the requirement to wear a mask in public. And the County estimates that our transmission rate has held steady, even gone down a small amount from 0.92 last week to 0.91 today, still staying under that magical one threshold, meaning fewer than one person is being infected by a new person who has become infected.”

Ann Lee, the Co-Founder and CEO of CORE, mentioned the achievements made so far through partnership among government, private sector, volunteers and community; but she said that “testing alone will not help us open the economy, it will not stop the preventable deaths we see tragically rising and it will not re-empower your lives alone. To do that we are asking our partners, the county, the state, the federal government, citizens, to meet us in this new challenge. We are asking the public at large to make the basic sacrifice, to mask, to distance, to test, and if testing positive, to quarantine and completely participate with contact tracers. We ask the county, the state to meet our now 48-hour test turnaround with

contact tracing within 72 hours upon receiving a positive result and to support those who cannot quarantine safely if positive.”

Regarding people who might test positive, Garcetti recommended that “If you think that you are sick, and if you receive a positive test quarantine immediately, please answer that call from contact tracers. And if you get a positive test result and don’t immediately hear from a contact tracer, call them at 833-540-0473. And this line is open seven days a week from 8:00 AM to 8:30 PM.”

Curative CEO and Co-Founder, Fred Turner, talked about how Curative has grown up in the time of COVID. “Back in March, we were a small company with fewer than 50 people, and it’s really been the partnership with the city of L.A. that allowed us to scale up. And since then, we’ve gone from doing thousands of tests per day when we first started to now doing over 60,000 tests today across the whole country, and we’re doing about 18,000 today, right now, in L.A. city.”

L.A. City’s Fire Chief Ralph Terrazas talked about L.A. Fire Department’s quick and creative answer to the mayor’s call to be at the forefront of the city’s testing operation, establishing public drive through testing sites throughout the city, providing testing for skilled nursing facilities, public safety partners, people experiencing homelessness, people living in public housing, the general public at popup locations, and even firefighters. “This has been a huge effort, made more challenging by our daily call load of over 1300 calls every day,” said Terrazas.

The conference gave the Angelinos timely updates on the current situation of COVID-19 pandemic in L.A., and on all issues related to COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

Screenshots from the Video

(Source: <https://www.rev.com/blog/transcripts/la-mayor-eric-garcetti-press-conference-transcript-august-5-will-shut-off-power-water-to-large-parties>)



L.A. Mayor Eric Garcetti speaking



Ann Lee speaking



Staff sanitizing the microphone and podium.



Fred Turner speaking



Ralph Terrazas speaking