

Residents for Responsible Desalination

2020 Candidate Questionnaire

For election to be held on November 3, 2020

Candidate: Oscar Rodriguez

oscar@oscarforhb.com

<https://www.oscarforhb.com/>

1. Please tell us why you are running for election to the Huntington Beach City Council.

My name is Oscar Rodriguez and I am running for Huntington Beach City Council because growing up in Huntington Beach, I have not been represented by the council majority. As a community advocate that has been involved in numerous actions involving environmental justice, education and coalition building,

I know I can bridge the clear divide that exists between different areas within the city of Huntington Beach. Special interests have dominated the council chambers and there is a need to refocus the goals and priorities to include all people. Since 2015, I have fought for environmental justice, against the anti-immigrant rhetoric by current council members, supported affordable housing, supporting a homeless shelter, equitable access to youth sports and much more. I will bring a new perspective to the council chambers; one that is young, forward thinking and stands with the working class community of Huntington Beach.

2. What is your vision for the City?

COVID-19

The Covid-19 pandemic has presented us with unprecedented challenges and demonstrated our vulnerabilities as a local municipality. Huntington Beach has been one of the heaviest hit areas in the county. With hundreds of residents finding themselves food, housing, and job insecure, we must do our part to help community members and families at the very least have access to basic necessities. We must also help our small business community, which has suffered immensely as a result of the pandemic. Our Mom-and-Pop shops are a pillar to the local economic engine that makes our city such a great place to live. We must enact policies that help our local businesses adjust to and thrive in today's economy.

I support:

- Offering outdoor settings such as city owned parks and property to local businesses who

Residents for Responsible Desalination

2020 Candidate Questionnaire

For election to be held on November 3, 2020

have found it difficult to comply with state mandated orders.

- The existing state moratorium on evictions and foreclosure to protect renters and homeowners. I would support expanding the moratorium to small businesses that were forced to shut down in addition to those that are having difficulty during this difficult time.

- Coordinating with the County of Orange to expand testing, especially in high zip code areas such as 92647 and 92648.

ENVIRONMENT

Although Huntington Beach was once a city whose economy relied heavily on oil production, the years when rigs and pumps dominated our shores are long gone. Today, we have a responsibility to ensure that the air we breathe, water we consume, open space we enjoy, and wildlife we see are protected and remain a top priority. While many environmental concerns are handled by state and regional agencies such as the California Coastal Commission, South Coast Air Quality Management District, Department of Toxic Substances, Orange County Water District, and the Santa Ana Regional Water Board, we as a city can also take initiative to prioritize policies that protect our environment, create sustainability for future generations, and preserve our open spaces throughout the city.

I support:

- Working directly with state, federal, and local agencies to prioritize environmental protections and the implementation of an enforcement mechanism.
- Protecting our coast from polluting industries.
- Community Choice Energy and switching to cleaner alternatives that also promote local autonomy.
- Preserving the Bolsa Chica Wetlands and expanding mitigation efforts.
- Keeping our beaches clean, especially during the busy summer months, by increasing the amount of accessible waste bins and scheduling frequent pick-ups.

I oppose:

Residents for Responsible Desalination

2020 Candidate Questionnaire

For election to be held on November 3, 2020

- The Poseidon Desalination Project - it is too expensive, unsustainable and will increase water costs throughout the region. It will also negatively impact our wildlife and environment.

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

One of the most critical issues facing our community is access to affordable housing. Having adequate, secure, and reliable housing is one of our most basic human needs. Today, one in four Americans pay over 40% of their income on housing, causing enormous stress on families and leading to increases in homelessness. Two of my top priorities are to ensure that the new Navigation Center (opening November 2020) alleviates stressors of the chronically homeless population in the city and that we support policies that prevent homelessness from happening in the first place.

I Support:

- Collaborating with non-profit organizations to prioritize affordable housing for working class families, seniors, and veterans that already live in Huntington Beach.
- Rehabbing existing dwellings into affordable housing through grants via the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
- Partnering with our local community college and school districts to help residents transition into market rate housing and/or homeownership via educational workshops covering topics such as increasing credit score, debt management, first-time home buyer, and budgeting.
- Legislation at the state level that would give our city more autonomy to govern mobile home parks locally. Mobile home parks are an affordable alternative to live in the city and many of our seniors on fixed incomes benefit from this. Mobile home parks should be protected from new developers and increased rents.

I Oppose:

- High density development (HDD) and Opportunity Zones - they cause displacement of Huntington Beach residents, lead to rent increases, and threaten the integrity of our local

Residents for Responsible Desalination

2020 Candidate Questionnaire

For election to be held on November 3, 2020

community.

- Density bonuses that incentivize and enable developers to increase project density while only being required to include a small amount of affordable units.

Eliminate Evergreen Contracts

An Evergreen Contract is a contract that is renewed year after year even after it expires and the City of Huntington Beach has one with a multi-billion dollar private company. Although efforts were made to renegotiate this contract in 2019, we ought to make sure we do not engage in these types of contracts because oftentimes we, the residents, pay more for services. I believe that going through the Request for Proposal or RFP process with a maximum of 5 years to consider renewing, would allow competitive bidding amongst different service providers.

Community Engagement and Empowerment

Oscar knows the importance of community engagement and empowerment because he has experienced it first hand. One of Oscar's all time favorite sayings is "once you educate someone, you cannot take that away" and that is where empowerment begins. It is important that we include the voices of all residents regardless of where they live in the city and our efforts must be genuine, sincere and with purpose. With technology, I know we can outreach to more residents in a timely manner and ensure that our policy reflects data driven decisions. I support looking at ways to expand our outreach capacity to inform residents about projects and developments happening in their local neighborhoods.

3. What public boards, committees, and/or commissions, non-profits have you served on in the last five years?

I am the Vice Chair for the California Democratic Party, Chicano Latino Caucus, Region
I was also recently elected to the Democratic Party of OC Central Committee by voters in the primary election. I am co-founder of Oak View ComUNIDAD, a community driven group that focuses on issues that affect socioeconomically disadvantaged communities in Huntington Beach and Orange County. I am currently a board member at the Environmental Justice Advisory Council at the South Coast Air Quality Management

Residents for Responsible Desalination

2020 Candidate Questionnaire

For election to be held on November 3, 2020

District. I am also a board member and treasurer for a non-profit organization called Corazon de Mariposas.

4. Do you feel that the current or near future water needs of Huntington Beach require the construction of a local seawater desalination plant?

As an oil-rich city beginning in the 1920s, the years when oil dominated our shores are long gone. Today, we have a responsibility of ensuring the air we breathe, water we consume, open space we enjoy and wildlife we see, are protected and remain a top priority. While many environmental concerns are handled by state and regional agencies such as the California Coastal Commission, South Coast Air Quality Management District, Department of Toxic Substances, Orange County Water District and the Santa Ana Regional Water Board. As a council member, I commit to ensuring our community's quality of life is not diminished by greed and that we invest in policies that create sustainability for future generations.

The current or near future water needs of Huntington Beach should be of concern, however, we have to acknowledge that we as a city (and county) are in a better position as it relates to our local water autonomy than places like San Diego county. We know that Orange County still consumes more water than the average county in California and that means that we have to prioritize conservation and preservation first before we look at desalination.

5. Did you support the approval by the City of Poseidon's Environmental Impact Report, Conditional Use Permit, and other permits to construct and operate a seawater desalination plant in our city?

a. Why or why not?

I have briefly looked at the EIR and do not support the conditional use permit and other permits to construct the desalination plant. Given the history of Poseidon's campaign contributions to elected officials, I believe there was not much due diligence. This is something I need to do more research on.

Residents for Responsible Desalination

2020 Candidate Questionnaire

For election to be held on November 3, 2020

6. Do you support the continued use of the abandoned AES Power Plant's open-ocean intake and outfall pipes to serve the Poseidon desalination plant's operational needs?

a. Why or why not?

No. The AES Power Plant was built in the 1950's and we know the causes and effects of wear and tear. Poseidon's usage of infrastructure that is decades old is a disaster waiting to happen. Also, we must consider that if anything were to happen to the open-ocean intake and outfall pipes, we the ratepayers are on the hook for paying for the water while repairs happen as the current contract locks us in for 30 years.

7. Do you feel that the probable costs of Poseidon's desal water would require such measures as public subsidies and/or participation by water districts in blending expensive water with cheaper water to bring down the cost of desalinated water?

I do not support public subsidies for private projects, especially those proposed by Wall St. investors. At the recent Santa Ana Regional Water Board there was a comment made about cost and part of their plan is to already blend expensive water with water from the Ground Water Replenishment System to reduce the cost. I do not support this.

8. Have you solicited or received campaign contributions from Poseidon Water, Poseidon Resources, Brookfield Infrastructure Partners, an affiliated PAC, association, OC-WISE, OCTax, OC Taxpayers, members of the Board of Directors, or senior management, either directly or indirectly?

a. If yes, who have you solicited and how much have you raised or intend to raise from such sources?

Absolutely, not