

## **ELEMENTAL HALL OF SHAME**

## **Water: Cleanup Stragglers**

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Finally, some progress is being made on ocean pollution. Regulations are in place, and Los Angeles residents are so keenly aware of the problem that last November they passed Proposition O, a \$500-billion bond to clean the toxic substances and bacteria from storm water before it reaches the ocean.

Cities far from the beach, though, see curbing ocean pollution as a costly burden with little benefit to them.

Three recent California court decisions, coming within two weeks of each other, should put an end to the wrangling over whether the regional and state water boards can impose clean-water standards on municipalities and builders.

The answer: They can and should.

Cities are rightly nervous about this whole business of wringing pollutants from water before it hits storm drains and waterways. Urban runoff isn't a simple problem with a simple solution. It can require a host of efforts: better street-sweeping, storm-drain filters, you name it.

Instead of getting with the program and figuring it out, though, builders and some municipalities have dragged their heels for years, filing costly lawsuits.

Now three of those suits have lost, two before the state Supreme Court. Despite this, in the one lawsuit that lost at the trial-court level, Los Angeles County and 30 inland cities are asking the court to reconsider and allow them to evade tough anti-pollution rules.

Dirty coastal waters are bad for the whole region — its beach visitors, its marine wildlife and its tourist industry.

Living 20 miles from the ocean isn't an excuse for polluting it.