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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement from Mark Whitworth, Vernon City Administrator and Fire Chief, on state legislature’s review of city and Light and Power department

Vernon, CA – Vernon City Administrator and Fire Chief Mark Whitworth today issued the following statement regarding the state Legislature’s Joint Legislative Audit Committee (JLAC) review of city finances and the city’s Department of Light and Power:

“I heartedly endorse the proposed state audit of the City of Vernon’s finances and the City of Vernon’s Department of Light and Power. Our city traditionally has provided for an independent audit of both the City and the Department of Light and Power.

“The city’s independent auditor, Macias Gini & O’Connell, is one of the top accounting firms in the state of California and audits major cities, counties and state agencies. They have been the City’s independent auditor since 1999. In addition, our Department of Light and Power is audited by a number of regulatory agencies, and the results of those audits have been positive. We are happy to share all of that information with the state auditor. We will provide the state auditor with whatever information it needs during the course of this review.

“With respect to the bonds that have been issued by the Department of Light and Power, our bond counsel, Orrick Herrington, and our advisors stand ready to cooperate with the state auditors. The Internal Revenue Service has initiated an examination of the bonds issued by the Department of Light and Power in 2009, and we are fully cooperating with the IRS in that review.

“The city also now is in the midst of implementing a historic package of reforms to our governance structures in response to recommendations urged by Senator Kevin De Leon and the City’s Independent Ethics Advisor, former Attorney General John Van de Kamp. With the help of these outside, independent evaluations of our practices and operations, we are on the path to becoming a model of good governance, and we will provide the state auditor with the information it needs regarding our governance practices and these reform measures.

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“We look forward to this opportunity to work with the state and to demonstrate the continued financial health of the City of Vernon and our Department of Light and Power. Our city has been under the microscope for some time now, but we are confident that our commitment to transparency and working cooperatively with those who are trying to help us improve, will help us reach our goal of becoming a model city.”

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Vernon was founded in 1905 to create jobs in California. Vernon’s 1,800 businesses create more than 105,000 jobs in the Los Angeles area – including 55,000 jobs within the city’s 5.2-mile boundary. The Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation designated Vernon as California’s ‘Most Business Friendly City.’ Vernon generates more than \$330 million in state income and sales taxes, \$1.1 billion in taxable spending. Vernon’s businesses provide more than 4.4 billion in salaries and wages annually for workers in Los Angeles County