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In response: Restore democracy

By Diane Takvorian 5 P.M. JAN. 23, 2015

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Councilman Todd Gloria's efforts to reform the city's referendum system is exactly what is needed to restore democracy. Recommended by

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legislative decisions.

Case in point is the defeat of the Barrio Logan Community Plan Update in June 2014 as the result of a referendum financed by the shipbuilding industry.

After four years of extensive community participation by thousands of residents that resulted in a compromise approved by the City Council that would have improved the community by mitigating pollution and thereby reducing childhood asthma, the plan was repealed by voters.

This, despite a finding by a local judge confirming that the public had been deceived by the signature gatherers but still allowed the election to proceed. Ultimately the special interests opposing the Barrio Logan plan spent more than \$1.7 million to win their referendum campaign, outspending the local community by 17-1, and leaving the outdated and dangerous industrial zoning in place.

This is a clear example of the distortion of a true democratic process at the expense of community residents who will have to live with the devastating effects.

Reform is overdue and Councilman Gloria is leading the way.

Diane Takvorian
 Executive director,
 Environmental Health Coalition

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