

# Backing Obama costs labor's Durazo

(Labor, from Page B1)

"It's become part of a pattern, and it raises questions about the ability to lead, to make the decisions that make the labor unions united," said Freeman, who called Durazo's handling of the matter "slick and undignified."

The federation has enormous pull in Los Angeles County, helping to elect federal, state and local politicians at a time when unions in other parts of the country are struggling to regain influence. The federation has already vowed to make its candidate for county supervisor, state Sen. Mark Ridley-Thomas, (D-Los Angeles), the winner in this year's election to replace Supervisor Yvonne B. Burka, who is stepping down. Freeman's union represents 180,000 long-term healthcare workers across the state, many of them based in Los Angeles County. And in recent weeks, complaints about Durazo also have come from the building trade

unions, which represent just over 10% of the labor coalition.

In labor circles, Durazo broke with tradition by endorsing Obama, side-stepping established rules that require county and state labor councils to back only those candidates chosen by the national AFL-CIO. Those leaders have yet to make endorsements in the presidential race.

Asked about the complaints Tuesday, federation spokeswoman Mary Gutierrez described the accusations as an internal matter. But earlier this month, Durazo acknowledged that some union members felt her endorsement left the mistaken impression that the county federation had lined up behind Obama.

"I did my best to assure them that in everything I do, I am not going to insert the name of the L.A. County Federation of Labor," she said.

Durazo won the county's top labor job in 2006, after having established herself as a

**'I did my best to assure them that in everything I do, I am not going to insert the name of the L.A. County Federation of Labor.'**

— MARIA ELENA DURAZO, the federation's head

strong advocate for Unite Here, the hotel and restaurant workers union. The El Sereno resident took the job one year after the death of her husband, Miguel Contreras, a gifted tactician who had run the federation during its rise to prominence.

To backers of Durazo, the discussions surrounding her endorsement are overblown. Mike Garcia, president of Service Employees International Union, Local 1877, said Durazo resolved most of the complaints by addressing the federation's executive board last week.

During that meeting, Durazo presented a legal opinion that showed that her time off

did not violate the federation's rules.

"The vast majority of the people in the room recognized that she has every right to take personal time and go on vacation, as long as she separates herself from... the federation in her effort to support Obama," said Garcia, whose union represents janitorial workers, security guards and airport workers.

Still, the Obama endorsement is not the only controversy to touch the federation's leader. Last year, Durazo infuriated members of the building trade unions by siding with another union in a fight over the planned expansion of Providence Holy Cross Medical Center in Mission Hills.

While the construction trades pushed the Los Angeles City Council to approve the hospital expansion, Durazo sided with the nurses union, which sought more environmental review of the project — a gambit designed to gain leverage in the campaign to organize private healthcare workers on the West Coast.

The Los Angeles/Orange County Building and Construction Trades Council responded last week by drafting a resolution demanding that the federation's top official stay neutral when there is a disagreement between unions, unless two-thirds of the federation's delegates are in agreement.

The resolution was presented to the federation's delegates Monday. And in a letter accompanying the resolution, Richard Slawson, executive secretary of the building trade council, implied that Durazo had ignored the needs of his members by lobbying council members to push for an 18-month delay of the hospital project.

"In fact, when asked what the building trades thought

about the [hospital] project by one of the City Council members, she purportedly said: 'Screw the crafts — they don't support our people,'" Slawson wrote.

Slawson said the resolution focused on the dispute over Providence Holy Cross, not the presidential campaign.

Still, Slawson sent another, handwritten memo in the days after the Obama decision, saying he was shocked that Durazo had "made her own decision on the president of the United States with the general presidents of all affiliated AFL-CIO unions coming to a decision."

Gutierrez, the federation's spokeswoman, would not address the complaints contained in Slawson's letter, saying they would be reviewed by the federation's executive committee.

"We have an internal democratic process for handling these kinds of concerns, and we're going to handle this matter just like any other," she said.

david.eulwiser@latimes.com Times staff writers Duke Helfand and Joe Mathews contributed to this article.

**Winter Refacing SALE!**  
**CABINET REFACING**  
 NOW \$199  
 • Limited Time Offer  
 • Granite Countertops  
 • Replacement Hardware  
 • Visit our website for details  
**Southern Kitchen Center**  
 (888) 569-8036  
 2413 Pacific Coast Hwy., #207 Lomita, CA

**Leak Repair**  
 ADVANCED ROOFING SOLUTIONS  
 All Roof Types, Chimneys, Skylights, & Rain Gutters.  
**FREE ESTIMATES!!!**  
 (310) 676-8888  
 Serving All L.A. County

**Leak Repair**  
 ADVANCED ROOFING SOLUTIONS  
 All Roof Types, Chimneys, Skylights, & Rain Gutters.  
**FREE ESTIMATES!!!**  
 (310) 676-8888  
 Serving All L.A. County

**New Year's Resolution?**  
**The Zone Diet delivered to your doorstep!**  
 Call Now!  
**ZONE-LA.COM**  
**310-246-2320**

**MEPHISTO**  
 THE WORLD'S FINEST WALKING SHOES  
 Men's & Women's Winter Clearance SALE!  
**SALE**  
 Save 25% to 50%  
**ON SALE NOW!!!**  
 1727 Westcliff Drive Newport Beach 949-642-FEET  
 140 So. Lake Ave Pasadena 626-683-9323  
 73 580 El Paseo Palm Desert 760-776-4262

**Leak Repair**  
 ADVANCED ROOFING SOLUTIONS  
 Specializing In Roof Repairs, Preventative Maintenance Programs, Roof Tune-Ups & Coatings, Concrete & Clay Tile, Wood Shake, Flat, Rock, Asphalt Shingle, Metal, Decks, Windows, Walls, Chimneys, Skylights, Rain Gutter Cleaning.  
**FREE ESTIMATES!!!**  
 Residential/Townhouse & Condo / Commercial  
 Workmanship Guaranteed  
**(310) 676-8888**  
 Lic.# 811902 Serving All L.A. County Insured/Bonded

# Tower fans singing the blues

(Tower, from Page B1) borhood "chaos" the store caused when it was in business

city, 32,000 square-foot com-

pany — what Los Angeles

er been deemed incomplete

emerged as the center of this country's recording industry.

The Sunset Strip has been an entertainment industry hot spot since the 1930s. Clubs like Ciro's, Mocambo and the Trocadero were favorite hangouts for Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr., Humphrey Bogart, Bugsy Siegel and many others.

**U.S. Navy Announces Alternative Arrangements for Implementing the National Environmental Policy Act and Requests Public Input**

On January 15, 2008, the Department of the Navy accepted alternative arrangements, approved by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). These alternative arrangements specifically address the use of mid-frequency active (MFA) sonar and its effects on marine mammals during Navy exercises in Southern California (SOCAL) Operating areas. These exercises include Composite Training Unit Exercises (COMPTUEXs) and Joint Task Force Exercises (JTFEXs) scheduled to occur between January 15, 2008 and January 23, 2008. A Decision Memorandum documenting the Navy's acceptance of these alternative arrangements was published in the Federal Register on January 24, 2008.

Information on the Navy's proposals for the SOCAL Operating Area including the full text of the Decision Memorandum is available at [www.SOCALRangeComplexEIS.com](http://www.SOCALRangeComplexEIS.com).

The Navy will prepare a post-exercise assessment after each exercise. By this Notice, the Navy requests input from the public on the process for reviewing the post-exercise assessments. The Navy is also offering the public the opportunity to discuss the implementation of these alternative arrangements. Input on reviewing the post-exercise assessments and any requests to meet with Navy and CEQ representatives about the alternative arrangements may be submitted by contacting Mr. Alex Stone at (619) 545-9128 or in writing to:

Naval Air Station-North Island  
Attn: Alex Stone, CPF Environmental  
McGuinn Boulevard, Building 678, Room 218  
San Diego, CA 92135

where the Tower Records building

now passed muster. That meant Priore could not file for the resource designation which, if granted, could have permanently blocked demolition of the Tower Records building.

Priore's lawyer, Brant H. Dweirin, suggested that city officials intentionally dragged their feet on the paperwork to give Barket time to submit his. West Hollywood officials deny that.

"The city staff doesn't give development requests greater preference than designation applications," said Michael Jenkins of the city attorney's office.

Barket met last week with members of the West Hollywood Heights Homeowners Assn. who live on the hillside above the Tower Records site to assure them his project would "speak well to the environment and the iconic nature of the location." It will feature a high-end retail shop on the ground floor, the health club on the second level and offices on the top floor.

Brian Lewis, a spokesman for Barket, said the proposed building's nod to the site's iconic past might include something like rock 'n' roll-themed decorations in the gym.

"We don't want to forget that Tower Records played a role here," Lewis said.

But on Dec. 11 the city in-

er been deemed incomplete now passed muster. That meant Priore could not file for the resource designation which, if granted, could have permanently blocked demolition of the Tower Records building.

Priore's lawyer, Brant H. Dweirin, suggested that city officials intentionally dragged their feet on the paperwork to give Barket time to submit his. West Hollywood officials deny that.

"The city staff doesn't give development requests greater preference than designation applications," said Michael Jenkins of the city attorney's office.

Barket met last week with members of the West Hollywood Heights Homeowners Assn. who live on the hillside above the Tower Records site to assure them his project would "speak well to the environment and the iconic nature of the location." It will feature a high-end retail shop on the ground floor, the health club on the second level and offices on the top floor.

Brian Lewis, a spokesman for Barket, said the proposed building's nod to the site's iconic past might include something like rock 'n' roll-themed decorations in the gym.

"We don't want to forget that Tower Records played a role here," Lewis said.

But on Dec. 11 the city in-

Los Angeles Times  
**TRAVEL & ADVENTURE SHOW**  
**FEBRUARY 9 - 10, 2008**  
**LONG BEACH CONVENTION CENTER**  
 Travel Trade: Saturday 8 - 10 am  
 Public: Saturday & Sunday 10 am - 5 pm  
[latimes.travelshow.com](http://latimes.travelshow.com)  
 promo code: LAT