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April 19, 2010

Honorable Frank Mecham
Chairperson, Board of Supervisors
County of San Luis Obispo
976 Osos Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408-2040

Subject: Water Resources Advisory Committee Comments on the Draft
2009 Resource Management System Annual Summary Report

Dear Chairperson Mecham:

On January 6, 2010, the Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC) formed an ad hoc subcommittee to review the water-related sections of the draft 2009 Resource Management System Annual Summary Report (RMS). On April 7, 2010, the WRAC reviewed the draft RMS comments developed by the subcommittee, made minor changes, and voted to submit the attached comments to you for consideration.

Subcommittee members included Sue Luft (Environmental At-Large), Bill Garfinkel (District 2), Russ Thompson (Atascadero), Betty Winholtz (Morro Bay), and Michael Winn (District 4). Member Luft served as subcommittee chair.

Respectfully,

MICHAEL WINN
Chairperson, Water Resources Advisory Committee

cc: SLO County Board of Supervisors
SLO County Planning Commission
James Caruso, County Department of Planning and Building

Attachment: WRAC Recommendations for the 2009 Resource Management
System Annual Summary Report

Purpose of the Committee:

To advise the County Board of Supervisors concerning all policy decisions relating to the water resources of the SLO County Flood Control & Water Conservation District. To recommend to the Board specific water resource programs. To recommend methods of financing water resource programs.

Excerpts from WRAC By-Laws dated 3/6/07

WRAC Recommendations
for the
2009 Resource Management System
Annual Summary Report

1. The process to issue well permits should be modified. Well permits are issued by the Division of Environmental Health. Permits for new non-agricultural wells located in groundwater basins at LOS I, II or III (or basins whose safe yield is not known or wells in fractured formations) should be subject to the following requirements as amendments to Title 8 of the County Code:
 - a. semi-annual measurements by the Department of Public Works
 - b. installation of flowmeters on all new wells (excluding replacement wells)
 - c. enroll in the Flood Control and Water Conservation District's (District) well-measurement program
 - d. record water use and other information monthly and report semi-annually on a District-provided form.
2. Water use reporting of water by purveyors in support of the RMS is spotty at times. A lack of this type of basic information makes it difficult to analyze water use and to determine proper levels of severity for groundwater. The County should, either through its police powers or through the authority of the District, require all water purveyors (including mutual water companies) with over 10 connections to record water use and other information monthly and report semi-annually on a County-provided form.
3. Conditions should be established requiring wells associated with discretionary land use permits in groundwater basins in LOS I, II or III (or basins whose safe yield is not known or wells in fractured formations) to be a part of the District's water well level monitoring program.
4. The WRAC continues to be especially concerned with sea water intrusion in the coastal groundwater basins. The County should review the placement, effectiveness and possible expansion of the coastal sentry well program, especially in South County and Los Osos where sea water intrusion has already been documented. Investigation of sea water intrusion needs to be a high priority for the County, to the extent of their authority to address the specific situation.
5. Water planning and policy development requires close coordination between County departments. The WRAC recognizes that this coordination is akin to a three-legged stool: Public Works, Planning &

Building, and Public Health (as the issuer of well permits). These three departments of the County need to increase their efforts to coordinate the County's approach to water issues. To begin coordination, the Health Dept-issued well permits should be subject to review for consistency with ASR action recommendations, Resource Capacity Studies, and County General Plan policies of the COSE.

6. The WRAC recognizes the efforts of vineyards to manage their water usage; however, recent efforts in North County have shown that we possess poor information on water use. In order to gather more data, voluntary well metering, monitoring and reporting should be encouraged.
7. The County should institute a three-phased approach to stream gauges:
 - Continue gathering data from the stream gauges in place, refurbishing those in need of repair.
 - Make a list of strategic places where stream gauge data would be effective and no gauges are in place.
 - Make a phased-in schedule for funding and installing the needed gauges over a 3-5 year period.
8. The District shall continue to implement its Data Enhancement Plan with respect to well monitoring, and consider establishing an independent automated observation well program for groundwater basins with levels of severity (LOS) I, II, or III.
9. The report should include a map of the entire county showing the areas covered, and not covered, for water supply findings.

These comments were unanimously approved by the WRAC on April 7, 2010.