# Th3a & 4a

## A-4-MRA-19-0034 / 9-19-0918

California-American Water

**SUPPORT LETTERS**

Packet 2
Updated
September 9, 2020

## Luster, Tom@Coastal

**From:** THOMAS <tbpelikan@comcast.net>
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 09, 2020 1:24 PM
**To:** CalAmMonterey@coastal
**Subject:** Appeal No. A-3-MRA-19-0034; Approve Cal Am Desal Project Permit

To: Honorable Chair Padilla & Commissioners

Two fish (steelhead) swim into a concrete wall. One turns to the other and says... Dam!

It has been a great step forward to remove the San Clemente dam and provide miles of new spawning river environment. But, to carry on watershed repair we need multiple sources of new non-Carmel River water so there is water available for habitat restoration and improvement.

As a board member of CRSA I highly recommend the Coastal Commission board approve the proposed desalination project for the Monterey Peninsula even though the staff report recommends against it. We live next to the Pacific Ocean. There is no other sustainable water source for us. We're just moving the chairs around on the Titanic with the other alternatives.

We seriously doubt that Pure Water Monterey Phase II will provide enough water for the Monterey Peninsula once the development/growth flood gates are opened. The economic/political pressures are just too great and as usual there will be lots of money made at the cost of further environmental destruction. And, if we are to believe science, we are in megadrought cycle that is worsened by human activities. (https://fishbio.com/field-notes/the-fish-report/tales-dry-times-human-effects-historic-drought-cycles August 31, 2020 www.fishbio.com)

So, I plead that you ask all those really smart people who wrote 154 page report denying
a desalination project make some helpful positive suggestions how to modify the plan so that it can be approved and implemented. We need some alternatives fast. How about some smaller modular less problematic city desal units locally located such as the old Monterey sewage treatment plant, the proposed but potentially rejected site but with different water sources, fix and use Marina desal unit...

Please give us and the Carmel River steelhead this desalination plan or a modification that will work for the Coastal Commission, the Monterey Peninsula and the Carmel River watershed and steelhead.

Thomas Pelikan, Ph.D.
24468 San Mateo Ave.
Carmel, CA 93923
831-601-8270
tbpelikan@comcast.net
Board Member CRSA

Sent from Xfinity Connect App

Brian LeNeve
P.O. Box 1012
Carmel, CA 93921
brian@brianleneve.com
831-601-9762

Honorable Chair Padilla and Commissioners
California Coastal Commission
45 Fremont, Suite 2000
San Francisco, CA 94105-2219

September 8, 2020

**RE: Appeal No. A-3-MRA-19-0034; Approve Cal Am Desal Project Permit**

Honorable Chair Padilla and Commissioners:

My Name is Brian LeNeve and I was one of the parties who appealed the Marina Planning Commissions denial of the Coastal Development Permit to Cal Am for the slant wells in Marina. I have attended every meeting where this subject has come up including the hearing in Half Moon Bay where I sat with 4 friends all day hoping to get a chance to speak. When in the late afternoon the commission decided to give a bus load of speakers preference so they could get home in time, it made it impossible for the five of us to speak as we also had other commitments that required us to leave before 5:00. It was very unfortunate you allowed some speakers favorable time slots to the disadvantage of all others and I hope you will take that into consideration when arranging speakers this time.

I was very disappointed in reading your staff report where they recommend denial of the permit. I find it hard to believe your staff recommends that the peninsula rely on a project (Pure Water Monterey Phase II) that:

1: Does not have a certified EIR.
2: Whose Board of Directors twice voted not to certify the EIR.
3: Whose Board of Directors has repeatedly stated the project was designed as a backup to the proposed desal project.
4: Whose Board of Directors has stated several times the permit for the waste water is not secured.
5: That leaves the peninsula without a backup water source when something fails.
6: That has not yet produced a drop of water and cannot guarantee it will produce as promised. Phase I has not so far.
7: That takes water from sources that would eventually end up in the Salinas River Lagoon providing water for that eco-system, and not evaluate the impacts to that environment.
8: That is not expandable making another project in the near future a necessity.
9: That leaves the Peninsula without a drought-proof water supply.
10: That takes water from the Salinas Valley that could be used to solve its critically over-drafted basin.

11: That wastes the $100,000,000.00 already spent on the proposed desal plant.
12: That will require another $100,000,000.00 to be spent in the near future to get us to where we are now.
13: That will require more money to build the actual desal plant in the future than it would cost now.
14: That assumes an average of 1,300-acre feet of water from ASR when it has never averaged that amount. The average has been less than half of the 1,300-acre feet projected by your staff and in the drought years it produces no water at all. Many scientists believe we are starting a mega-drought now.
15: That could cause further environmental damage to the Carmel River and its steelhead if and when the recycle project fails to produce the amount of water promised or ASR does not produce as staff projects, and not evaluate that damage with other environmental damages.
16: **That just does not actually solve the water shortage on the Monterey Peninsula.**

I find it hard to believe your staff ignored the State Water Resources Control Board when they told you the desal is needed.

I find it hard to believe your staff ignored the CPUC when they told you the desal plant is needed.

I find it hard to believe your staff ignored the EPA when they say the steelhead are in real danger.

I find it hard to believe the Coastal Commission required Cal Am to develop a desal plant supplied by slant wells and then state that the slant wells are not the way to go.

In my opinion there are a lot of people advocating for the second phase of Pure Water Monterey whose main objective is the take over of Cal Am. I believe you have been given information that paints Pure Water Monterey in a favorable light and misrepresents the water supply and demands of the peninsula. I believe those people think a take-over of Cal Am will be financially feasible if Cal Am is not permitted to build the desal plant, but will not be feasible if the people on the peninsula also have to finance the amount of a desal plant. My worst nightmare is in three years Monterey Peninsula Water Management District (the agency that would take over Cal Am) comes to the people on the peninsula and says: I am sorry we were wrong on the amount of water we can produce and we were wrong on the amount of water needed and we now must build a desal plant to meet demand.

I strongly request you approve the Coastal Development Permit for Cal Am and let the peninsula breath a collective sigh of relief knowing that we now have water and have water for the future.

Sincerely,

Brian LeNeve

**Luster, Tom@Coastal**

**From:** ingramgp <ingramgp@ix.netcom.com>
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 09, 2020 11:17 AM
**To:** CalAmMonterey@coastal
**Subject:** Letter Re CalAm Desal for September 17, 2020
**Attachments:** Coastal Comm Ltr for 9-17-20.pdf

September 8, 2020

VIA EMAIL : CalAmMonterey@coastal.ca.gov

Steve Padilla, Chair and Commissioners

California Coastal Commission

ATTN: Tom Luster

455 Market Street Suite 300

San Francisco, CA 94105

RE: DE NOVO APPEAL and CONSOLIDATED COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT
**Appeal No. A-3-MRA-19-0034 (California American Water Company, et. al., Monterey Co.)**
**Application No. 9-19-0918 (California American Water Co., Seaside, Monterey Co.)**

**LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR APPROVAL OF APPEAL AND ISSUANCE OF A CONSOLIDATED PERMIT FOR CAL-AM DESAL PROJECT**

Dear Chair Padilla and Commissioners:

For over 40 years, the Monterey Peninsula has had insufficient water capability/supply to appropriately and adequately serve immediate and long-term needs for a reliable and sustainable water supply to protect the Carmel River, area residents, the local economy, and the general Peninsula environment.

The desalination project has been thoroughly studied and determined reliable and sustainable. In contrast, the Pure Water Monterey (PWM) project has been partially studied and has already been shown unreliable and highly questionable with respect to sustainability. At best, and even with expansion, PWN may be able to function as originally intended ---- solely as a component of the desal project.

Given the unknowns and complexities of climate change, COVID-19, and other potential unforeseen or unknown issues in the future, we do not need additional delays or another 40 years of politics, inadequate water supply, and continued damage to the Peninsula's environmental and economic resources.

Please approve the appeal and approve and issue the permits required for the desal project.

Thank you.

*Candace Ingram*

Candace Ingram
441 Gibson Avenue
Pacific Grove, CA 93950
ingramgp@ix.netcom.com


September 8, 2020

Hon. Steve Padilla and Commissioners
California Coastal Commission
Att: Tom Luster
455 Market Street, Suite 300
San Francisco, CA 95105

Honorable Chair Padilla and Commissioners:

I am writing in support of the desalination project in Monterey County. I appreciate the challenge you have to navigate a contentious decision such as this. My personal support for this project is grounded in my service to Castroville as Pastor of North County Christian Center for the past eleven years, and as a community advocate. I have personally witnessed the struggles many families in Castroville have to survive economically. They often are employed in low-wage jobs and live in residences that house more than one family due to high rent and lack of affordable housing in our region. Many of these struggling individuals and families are constituents of my church.

You have opportunity with this decision to offer some real relief to a significantly disadvantaged population that resides in the largest unincorportated commercial center in the County. While other communities are well-represented by well-financed governmental agencies and leaders, Castroville's official advocates are few. Because of this, frequently throughout the years the community's infrastructural needs have been minimized or insufficiently addressed. Perhaps the most critical infrastructural need is our water supply due in large part to salt water intrusion that has compromised most of the water wells in the community. Please understand, the situation is not some potential future crisis, but an actual immediate problem that requires intervention. The consequences of an inadequate and delayed response will be quite severe for some of the most vulnerable.

In light of this real-time crisis, I urge you to approve the desal project which will provide a long-term sustainable resource to an historically significant and long under-valued community.

Sincerely,

Rev. Richard Coffelt, D.Min.

## Luster, Tom@Coastal

**From:** Sue McCloud <cloud93921@aol.com>
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 09, 2020 9:31 AM
**To:** CalAmMonterey@coastal
**Cc:** Luster, Tom@Coastal
**Subject:** Appeal No. A-3-MRA-19-0034; Approve Cal Am Desal Project Permit

September 9, 2020

Subject: Appeal No. A-3-MRA-19-0034; Approve Cal Am Desal Project Permit

Honorable Padilla, Chair and Commissioners. California Coastal Commission:

I speak to you as one who has been involved in the water issue since 1995—12 years of which were as Mayor of Carmel-by-the-Sea. Due to pending surgery, I am unable to be present but did wish to bring forth a developing issue with major impact on the decision before you today.

This new issue was brought about in large part by the impact of Covid 19. The front page of the Wall Street Journal, Section B of August 15-16 has the banner headline of "The Silicon Valley Exodus". More dramatic was the termination by Pinterest of their 88 Bluxome Project , south of Market St. in San Francisco, for which they had to pay a termination fee of $89.5 million.

As the article expanded on this development, it noted that even though rents have dropped in many of the most expensive parts of the Bay Area, Menlo Park (home to Facebook), Cupertino (home to Apple) and Mountain View (home to Google), there is a changing work quotient that one can work from home resulting in a tech worker exodus to work remotely. Our Monterey County area is already seeing this growth.

Carmel's real estate market has been hit by a shortage of builders causing a dramatic impact on new construction and remodels in both the commercial and residential districts. The point of this turn of events is that all projections for new water have been overtaken by these events and are fast becoming history as they are too low. Water projections need to be increased in light of the amount of water required for the homes being built. Existing homes are being sold even during remodeling for double the original sale price. How long this will be sustained is anyone's guess, but the point is that circumstances have changed dramatically and thereby accelerated projected water needs. How this impacts the whole water district is probably not yet known, but what is known are the projections that are underway to start to develop the former Fort Ord.

In conclusion, it appears that the underlying projects in the larger Monterey Peninsula/County are being accelerated and increased in a scope that will exceed projected water availability! In sum, the ability to protect the Carmel River, to protect

residents as climate change and drought scenarios become more prevalent, and to meet unforeseen and evolving water needs (to include fire-fighting) for the Monterey Peninsula and surrounding area cannot be met without a desal project.

Sue McCloud

Cc: Tom Luster

**Luster, Tom@Coastal**

**From:** Bob Bourke <rebourke2003@yahoo.com>
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 08, 2020 9:28 PM
**To:** CalAmMonterey@coastal
**Subject:** Appeal No. A-3-MRA-19-0034; Approve Cal Am Desal Project Permit

California Coastal Commission
Honorable Chair Padilla and Commissioners

Dear Mr. Padilla and Commissioners

As a proud member of the Carmel River Steelhead Association I'd greatly appreciate your vote to proceed with construction and operation of a full scale desalinization plant in Monterey County. CRSA lists a dozen good reasons why the county should proceed with this project, but I'll not repeat these here as I'm sure you've seen them in multiple letters already. Instead I'd like to offer you my perspective from a life time of work as an biologist and environmental scientist.

I worked in Hawaii for 42 years ('75 - '17) and retired to Pacific Grove - as this is where I first learned to explore tide pools and scuba dive. Hawaii has fresh water supply problems also. And, like Monterey, made investigations into the feasibility of desalination in the 1990's, without ever making the final decision to construct a plant. While efficiency of desal plants have increased by about 50% since the '90's, the cost of construction in Hawaii is now almost 10 times higher. It doesn't look like they will implement this elegant solution in the near future. Moving forward NOW to construct this important infrastructure will be much less expensive than waiting another decade. Timing of construction with likely upcoming Federal support for infrastructure improvement projects could result in significant fiscal savings for our citizens.

The need for desalinization is inevitable. Water conservation initiatives, recycling water, and recapturing runoff, are also necessary but these actions are all based upon a fixed (or more likely dwindling with climate change) supply. Desalinization is the only alternative that actually increases the supply of fresh water over the long term. Please consider a long term solution for our urban drinking water needs.

Aloha

Bob Bourke
122 19th St.
Pacific Grove, CA 93950

808 256 2057

## Luster, Tom@Coastal

**From:** Frank Emerson <frank.t.emerson@gmail.com>
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 08, 2020 8:33 PM
**To:** Steve Park
**Cc:** CalAmMonterey@coastal
**Subject:** Re: Appeal No. A-3-MRA-19-0034; Approve Cal Am Desal Project Permit

And you too Steve. Thanks to everyone who writes and gives comments to the Commission!

On Tue, Sep 8, 2020, 8:03 PM Steve Park <stevepark@razzolink.com> wrote:
Excellent Frank! Thank you for your CRSA support at all the different levels.
Steve

Sent from my iPad

> On Sep 8, 2020, at 11:08 AM, Frank Emerson <frank.t.emerson@gmail.com> wrote:
>
> Frank Emerson
>
> 501 Lighthouse Ave. #6
>
> Monterey, CA 93940
>
> September 8, 2020
>
> Via Email: CalAmMonterey@coastal.ca.gov
>
> Hon. Steve Padilla, Chair and Commissioners
> California Coastal Commission
>
> Attn: Tom Luster
> 45 Fremont, Suite 2000
> San Francisco, CA 94105- 2219
>
> Re: Support for California American Water's Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project

Honorable Chair Padilla and Commissioners:

Respectfully, I urge approval of the CalAm Desalination Project, despite staff's recommendation. I have been working as an unpaid volunteer for over 30 years to save the Carmel River Steelhead. Though speaking for myself I can say our group has devoted thousands of hours rescuing stranded juvenile steelhead, 12,000 this year alone. Hundreds of thousands over the years. We are a grassroots effort, we advocate and raise money to save the Carmel River and the Watershed itself. Our Steelhead are a Federally ESA listed species that are endangered because of illegal dewatering of the river. This decade-long problem results in total drying of the main channel and spawning tributaries, poor rearing conditions in the Carmel Lagoon and chronic groundwater overdraft. For decades our coastal community has used our limited aquifer and river as the sole source of freshwater. By all measures this has failed to be sustainable, not only regards extreme environmental degradation to our watersheds, but indeed as a reliable water supply.

As a member of the angling community with many connections within recreational angling I can tell you the loss of the fishery is not minor. Not to the store owners, tackle manufacturers, hotels, restaurants and anglers who benefit from the resource. Nor to our Tribal Communities who have lost a cultural, economic and spiritual connection to their fishery and land that sustained them for centuries. A central activity of the Esselen, and other coastal tribes, was the annual fishery. As an advisor to the Tribe on Steelhead issues I cannot speak for them but can tell you the lost fishery is a major issue for their members. California anglers also have been very disappointed by the inability of the community to come together and solve the water supply problems and restore the Carmel River Fishery. The Endangered Species Act requires recovery of Carmel River Steelhead. Anglers have public trust resource rights and an expectation that the State will ensure this fishery is here for our community and future anglers.

Opponents are now trying to once again stop the new water supply. Monterey Desal is a truly alternate water source that is not dependent on fickle winter rains, direct diversions from the Carmel River and chronically over drafted aquifers. Only the drought proof source can return enough flow to our beautiful river to restore the habitat of wildlife and fish. The claim by opponents that reclaimed waste and more diversions from the Carmel River, at any time of the year, can replace Desal is a false promise. It is unreliable, untested and insufficient to solve the problem of chronic groundwater overdraft that has plagued the entire watershed. Long term residents who grew up here are weary of the empty promises and failure of local agencies. I am writing to urge you to support and approve the required Coastal Development Permit for California American Water's Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project.

This project has been designed in an environmentally-responsible manner. It is in fact a major improvement over outdated water policies in California that continue chronic overdraft of our watersheds and aquifers at great cost to local rivers and wildlife. It utilizes a state-of-the-art subsurface intake well system and a commingled brine/wastewater discharge, a desalination technology that minimizes marine impacts and is preferred by the State Water Board, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and many ENGO's.

Pure Water Monterey was determined by the CPUC in its decision to approve the Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project to be of inadequate size to meet the terms of the Cease and Desist Order and the long-term water demands of the Monterey Peninsula.

The construction schedule for the project requires work begin as soon as possible in order to meet the Cease and Desist Order deadlines. Your review of this important project cannot be delayed. The solution is long, long overdue and the opponents that would have you continue to delay will perpetuate loss of listed species and jeopardize recovery that is required under the ESA.

Conservation alone cannot replace the shortfall between Cal Am's water supplies and anticipated future demands. Nor will the untested scheme proposed by opponents.

I respectfully ask that the Commission approve Cal Am's application for a Coastal Development Permit at the earliest opportunity.

Sincerely,

Frank Emerson

September 8, 2020

Monterey, CA 93940

<Emerson Desal SupportLetter (2).docx>

**Luster, Tom@Coastal**

| | |
|---|---|
| **From:** | Andy Walker <acwgolfer@yahoo.com> |
| **Sent:** | Tuesday, September 08, 2020 6:45 PM |
| **To:** | CalAmMonterey@coastal |
| **Cc:** | Rebecca Walker |
| **Subject:** | Appeal No. A-3-MRA-19-0034; Approve Cal Am Desal Project Permit |

Attention: California Coastal Commission/Honorable Chair Padilla and Commissioners,

We believe the best solution for providing an alternate water source for the Monterey Bay area is a new desalination plant currently awaiting a permit from the California Coastal Commission.

A desalination plant is the only viable source of water that can be expanded to meet the needs of the area. The Pure Water project of recycling waste water is not expandable and should only serve as a backup to the a desalination plant.

We would like to strongly encourage the California Coastal commission to issue a Coastal Development Permit to California American Water so that slant wells can be installed from the land to under the ocean as required to support the desalination project.

We appreciate your immediate attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

Andrew and Rebecca Walker
Carmel Residents
26625 Bonita Way, Carmel, CA. 93923

**Luster, Tom@Coastal**

**From:** Donna Singmaster <donna@singmaster.com>
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 08, 2020 1:46 PM
**To:** CalAmMonterey@coastal
**Subject:** Appeal No. A-3-MRA-19-0034; Approve Cal Am Desal Project Permit

To:
California Coastal Commission
Honorable Chair Padilla and Commissioners

Dear Honorable Chair Padilla and Commissioners,

I am writing to ask you to issue a Coastal Development Permit to California American Water to build the desalination plant.

I welcome the Pure Water Monterey recycling projects.
It is unclear if their projects provide enough to reduce the pumping of the Carmel River to legal limits.
If we have only Pure Water Monterey, we have no back-up.

It is my understanding your staff concluded there would be less overall environmental damage from Pure Water Monterey.
It is also my understanding that in their assessment, they:
1) did not consider the environmental damage to the Salinas River Lagoon
2) did not consider the harm to the Carmel River if Pure Water Monterey cannot produce enough.

I urge you to permit both projects.
Having **both the desalinization plant and Pure Water** recycling should provide enough water in our area for decades, and through droughts.

It is important for the California Coastal Commission to ensure we **prepare for the worst and hope for the best.**

Thank you,
Donna Singmaster
Pebble Beach, CA
Donna@Singmaster.com

**Unrelated to the above:**
1) Thank you for closing the beaches this past weekend.

2) Congratulation to Honorable Chair Padilla for surviving COVID-19

**Related to the Above:**

From National Geographic in 2015:

https://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2015/2/150212-megadrought-southwest-water-climate-environment/

**Worst Drought in 1,000 Years Predicted for American West**
**Global warming to cause historic "megadrought" by century's end.**

3 MINUTE READ

BY BRIAN CLARK HOWARD, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 12, 2015

LARGE PARTS OF the U.S. are in for a drought of epic proportions in the second half of this century, scientists warn in a new study that provides the highest degree of certainty yet on the impact of global warming on water supplies in the region.

The chances of a 35-year or longer "megadrought" striking the Southwest and central Great Plains by 2100 are above 80 percent if the world stays on its current trajectory of greenhouse gas emissions, scientists from NASA, Columbia University, and Cornell University report in a study published Thursday in the new open-access journal *Science Advances.*

If countries reduce their emissions to current "middle of the road" targets, the chances of a megadrought hitting the Great Plains drop to between 60 and 70 percent. But they remain nearly 80 percent for the Southwest.

That's because rising temperatures spurred by the greenhouse effect result in more evaporation and less precipitation for the region, which is already relatively dry. "Even at the middle-of-the-road scenario, we see enough warming and drying to push us past the worst droughts experienced in the region since the medieval era," said Benjamin Cook, the study's lead author and a scientist at NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies in New York.

**Why It Matters**

Drought often has significant impacts on agriculture, ecosystems, and city water supplies. "We see some of those impacts going on now in California," said Cook, referring to the ongoing drought that is the worst in that state's recorded history.

In fact, 11 of the past 14 years have seen drought in much of the American West, from California across to Texas and Oklahoma, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor.

In their study, Cook's team used 17 computer models of droughts and three models of soil moisture to predict the likelihood of dryness over the next century. After they found a high degree of agreement among the models, they applied them to data gathered from tree rings going back to about the year 1000.

They found that the megadrought that struck the region in the 1100s and 1200s—which has been tied to the decline of the ancient Pueblo peoples, or Anasazi, of the Colorado Plateau—was likely not as severe as the one expected in the near future.

"Even when selecting for the worst megadrought-dominated period, the 21st-century projections make the megadroughts seem like quaint walks through the Garden of Eden," study co-author Jason E. Smerdon of Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory said in a statement.

**The Big Picture**

The megadrought predicted for the U.S. seems to be part of a "northward creeping of desert bands" in other subtropical regions, especially in the Mediterranean and southern Africa, said Tom Painter, a snow and drought scientist with NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, who was not involved with the study. That shift is clearly related to changes in air circulation caused by global warming, but the precise mechanics are "fuzzy," Painter said.

The new study is the latest in a series over the past decade highlighting the challenge facing people in the American West, where strategies for coping with drought, such as irrigation and water conservation, have a long history. "The real challenge is whether we can take strategies we have now and apply them to the more severe droughts that are likely in the future," Cook said.

"Over the past year, water managers and the public have started paying more attention to the possibility of a megadrought," said Painter. "Water demand has

passed supply in some areas. Throwing 30 years of drought on top of that means we're going to have to change the way we live out here."

**Luster, Tom@Coastal**

**From:** Frank Emerson <frank.t.emerson@gmail.com>
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 08, 2020 11:08 AM
**To:** CalAmMonterey@coastal
**Subject:** Appeal No. A-3-MRA-19-0034; Approve Cal Am Desal Project Permit
**Attachments:** Emerson Desal SupportLetter (2).docx

Frank Emerson

501 Lighthouse Ave. #6

Monterey, CA 93940

September 8, 2020

Via Email: CalAmMonterey@coastal.ca.gov

Hon. Steve Padilla, Chair and Commissioners
California Coastal Commission

Attn: Tom Luster
45 Fremont, Suite 2000
San Francisco, CA 94105- 2219

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Sincerely,

Frank Emerson

September 8, 2020

Monterey, CA 93940

**Luster, Tom@Coastal**

**From:** Steve Park <stevepark@razzolink.com>
**Sent:** Monday, September 07, 2020 9:31 PM
**To:** CalAmMonterey@coastal
**Subject:** Appeal No. A-3-MRA-19-0034; Approve Cal Am Desal Project Permit

Help Needed

Our best chance to save the Carmel River Steelhead

The Carmel River Steelhead Association (CRSA) is asking all members to write the State Coastal Commission and demand the commission issue a Coastal Development Permit to California American Water (Cal Am). That permit would allow Cal Am to install slant wells from land to under the ocean and provide water for a new and needed desal plant.

Everything CRSA does to help steelhead, from habitat improvements, to barrier removal, to river clean up, to fish rescues are only a way to maintain a viable population of steelhead until water is restored to the river. Without adequate water we will never recover steelhead and as long as we have illegal pumping, we will never have adequate water.

In 1994 CRSA filed a complaint with the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) about Cal Am pumping water without a legal permit and damaging the steelhead population. That action ultimately led to the SWRCB issuing Water Order 1995-0010 telling Cal Am to diligently implement a new water source. In the following 25 years many attempts have been made to secure a new water source but none have been found or developed that eliminates Cal Am over-pumping the Carmel River. Most of the projects failed because of the involvement of people with different agendas, not the lack of technology. The result is that for 25 years the steelhead of the Carmel River have declined and been a pawn in all of the bickering.

Water One (the sewerage processing plant near the Material Recovery Facility) and Monterey Peninsula Water Management District (MPWMD) are in the process of completing a project to take waste water and turn it into drinking water. This project is called Pure Water Monterey but, as of this date, houses on the peninsula have not received any of that water and it is not positive how much water the project will actually produce. At best it will still leave us over 2,000-acre feet

short of what is needed to reduce pumping on the Carmel River to legal limits and help to recover steelhead.

Once again, there are people with different agendas and opinions fighting over different proposals. Not only are there different proposals, this time MPWMD and other groups are working to force Cal Am to sell its company on the Monterey Peninsula to MPWMD. It is this added dimension that is causing more problems and, in my opinion, affecting the thought process.

Cal Am is trying to build a desal plant near the Material Recovery Facility near Marina, and Water One with MPWMD are proposing a second phase of Pure Water Monterey. In all fairness there are arguments to be made for both proposals, but CRSA supports the desal plant because we believe it is the only project that will continually provide enough water into the next decades and through droughts. Some people believe we are starting a mega-drought now, and desal is the only project that is expandable.

The only argument for the recycled water project in lieu of desal is that recycled water will cost less now. However, if it cannot produce what it has promised (and so far, phase I has not) it will cost a lot more by delaying a desal plant that actually can produce what is needed.

**Arguments for desal and against only recycled water**

1. The Board of Directors of Water One have stated many times that Pure Water Monterey Phase II was designed and should be considered as a backup to the desal plant.
2. If the desal plant is built, Pure Water Monterey would be a backup should something go wrong.
3. If we only have Pure Water Monterey Phase II there will be no backup when something goes wrong and people will demand to start over-pumping the Carmel River again.
4. The Water One Board of Directors have voted twice not to approve the EIR for Phase II.
5. The Water One Board of Directors have stated the permit for the water to be used in Phase II has not been secured.
6. Any waste water taken from the lower Salinas Valley for Pure Water Monterey Phase II would end up in the Salinas River Lagoon providing non-salt water for that environment and benefit any steelhead still in the Salinas River.
7. The Salinas Valley is a critically over-drafted basin and any water taken for Pure Water Monterey could be used to reduce the overdraft of the Salinas Valley Ground Water Basin.

8. The proposed desal plant is expandable. Pure Water Monterey is not expandable and the volume is not guaranteed.
9. Pure Water Monterey **may** provide enough water to replace illegal water diversions from the Carmel River now, but at some time "now or in the near future" we will again need more water and as Pure Water Monterey is not expandable we would still have to build a desal plant at a lot more cost because of inflation.
10. There has been $100-million spent on this proposed desal plant that will be wasted if it is not completed and a desal plant in built in the future will have to spend another $100-million to get us to where we are now and then more to actually complete the plant than it would cost now.
11. One of the criticisms of the proposed desal plant is that due to climate change there will be coastal erosion making the proposed slant wells eroded into the ocean in 20 years and the wells will have to be relocated with no place identified. Yet the proponents of Pure Water Monterey Phase II say at best in 20 years we will need a new water source and nothing is identified.
12. The staff report to the Coastal Commission concluded there would be less overall environmental damage from the recycled water project than the desal plant but they did not consider environmental harm to the Salinas River Lagoon in their analysis and they also did not consider any harm to the Carmel River if the recycled water project cannot produce what is necessary.

For all of the above reasons we are asking all members to write to:

California Coastal Commission
Honorable Chair Padilla and Commissioners

I support this letter as it is written. I am a member of CRSA and the current president of CRSA. I completely support recycling of anything and I encourage innovative technology especially in the West where the future of water is in the crisis stage. However, I simply cannot watch human kind wipe out another animal species in this case the Carmel River Steelhead. This is a magnificent California coastal sea run rainbow trout who is hardy and determined to survive. The continued pumping of the Carmel River will, in the end, take this species from threatened to extinct.

Sincerely,
Steve Park
President

Sent from my iPad

**Luster, Tom@Coastal**

**From:** Paul Wible <pwible@comcast.net>
**Sent:** Monday, September 07, 2020 7:28 PM
**To:** CalAmMonterey@coastal
**Subject:** Appeal No. A-3-MRA-19-0034; Approve Cal Am Desal Project Permit

CalAmMonterey@coastal.ca.gov

California Coastal Commission
Honorable Chair Padilla and Commissioners

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Please consider these factors with your vote and ave our river and fish.

Respectfully,

Paul Wible
Resident of
Carmel by the Sea

## Luster, Tom@Coastal

**From:** Loren Walden <lorenwalden@gmail.com>
**Sent:** Monday, September 07, 2020 1:18 PM
**To:** CalAmMonterey@coastal
**Subject:** Appeal No. A-3-MRA-19-0034; Approve Cal Am Desal Project Permit

Honorable members of the California Coastal Commission,

We write this letter to you in support of the desalination operations and ask that you continue progress to get this done without further delay.

The waste treatment plant alone is not enough of a **long-term** backstop to keep from drawing upon the Carmel River, its tributaries, and ground water resources.

This project is too politicized - only when the facts and truth and science is adhered to can you get this done. HELP US! Our tributaries are bone dry! Come and see for yourselves! We will show you how bad it is in person if you want a guide. We need to stop pulling from the watershed in the valley! The waste water conversation is terrific and we applaud it - but is not enough.

Data will support your decision to approve the desalination and we residents of Carmel Valley and generations to come will benefit from your decisiveness.

Don't delay approving the desalination project any longer. This has gone on long enough.

Loren & Erica Walden
48 Calle de Los Ositos
Carmel Valley

--
Loren Walden
lorenwalden@gmail.com
415.203.8088

**Luster, Tom@Coastal**

**From:** Randy Lamont <rmlamont@comcast.net>
**Sent:** Monday, September 07, 2020 10:03 AM
**To:** CalAmMonterey@coastal
**Subject:** Appeal No. A-3-MRA-19-0034; Approve Cal Am Desal Project Permit

Dear California Coastal Commission and the Honorable Chair Padilla and Commissioners,

I strongly urge you to issue a Coastal Development Permit to California American Water (Cal Am). We must allow Cal Am to install slant wells from the land to under the ocean to provide water for a new and desperately needed desalination plant.

Sincerely,

Randy Lamont
Member, Carmel River Steelhead Association

## Luster, Tom@Coastal

**From:** Serradell, Amanda <Amanda.Serradell@montagehealth.org>
**Sent:** Friday, September 04, 2020 12:08 PM
**To:** CalAmMonterey@coastal
**Subject:** Appeal No. A-3-MRA-19-0034; Approve Cal Am Desal Project Permit
**Attachments:** Monterey Health Ltr re CCC Hearing 09.17.20.pdf

Good afternoon,

Please see attached for a letter regarding Appeal No. A-3-MRA-19-0034 from Dr. Steven Packer, President/CEO of Montage Health.

Thank you,
Amanda

Amanda Serradell
Sr. Executive Assistant to Dr. Steven Packer, President & CEO
Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula
P.O. Box HH
Monterey, California 93942
(831) 625-4503 - Phone
(831) 625-4948 – Fax

MONTAGE Health

MONTAGE Health

September 4, 2020

Via Email: CalAmMonterey@coastal.ca.gov

Hon. Steve Padilla, Chair and Commissioners
California Coastal Commission
Attn: Tom Luster
455 Market Street, Suite 300
San Francisco, CA 94105

Re: Appeal No. A-3-MRA-19-0034; Approve Cal Am Desal Project Permit

Honorable Chair Padilla and Commissioners:

I am writing to urge you to support and approve the required Coastal Development Permit for California American Water's Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project.

The Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project is California American Water's answer to the State Water Resources Control Board's 2009 Cease and Desist Order, which limits pumping from the Monterey Peninsula's primary water source, the Carmel River, and requires a replacement water source be on-line by December 31, 2021.

Approval of this project will protect the Carmel River and its threatened species; and by providing a sustainable long-term water supply and alternative source to the river, will allow the Monterey Peninsula community to comply with state regulations.

The project has been the subject of an extensive, six-year environmental review by state and federal agencies and was unanimously approved by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) in 2018.

The project utilizes a subsurface intake well system and a commingled brine/wastewater discharge, a desalination technology that minimizes marine impacts and is preferred by the State Water Board, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and your agency. The project's subsurface intake wells will also be located on a disturbed former industrial site, reducing impacts to biological resources.

Under the State Water Board's order to cease diversions from the Carmel River, Cal Am must ramp down its withdrawals from the river, which would result in severe water restrictions, including possible water rationing, unless a long-term permanent replacement source is put in place. The expansion of Pure Water Monterey does not have a clear path to being developed anytime soon and was determined by the CPUC in its decision to approve the Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project to be of inadequate size to meet the terms of the Cease and Desist Order and the long-term water demands of the Monterey Peninsula.

Failure to complete the project in a timely manner would be harmful for the Monterey Peninsula community.

The construction schedule for the project requires work begin as soon as possible in order to meet the Cease and Desist Order deadlines. Your final decision on this important project cannot be delayed without implications.

For years, our community has faced stringent water supply restrictions that have necessitated drastic water conservation measures, prohibited new service connections and increases in existing water use, limited economic growth and severely limited opportunities for affordable housing in the region. Faced with these constraints, local businesses and residents have become leaders in the state in water conservation. However, given the already low water usage rate, conservation alone cannot replace the shortfall between Cal Am's water supplies and anticipated future demands.

The benefits of the Project are clear. We ask that the Commission approve Cal Am's application for a Coastal Development Permit..

Sincerely,

Steven Packer, MD
President / CEO
Montage Health

**Luster, Tom@Coastal**

**From:** Energy@Coastal
**Sent:** Friday, September 04, 2020 9:25 AM
**To:** CalAmMonterey@coastal
**Subject:** Fw: - Gordon Mortensen Public Comment on September 2020 Agenda Item undefined 4a - Application No. 9-19-0918 (California American Water Co., Seaside, Monterey Co.) Sent to staff

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**From:** Gordon Mortensen <admin@watersupplyproject.org>
**Sent:** Thursday, September 3, 2020 8:20 PM
**To:** luke.gianni@amwater.com <luke.gianni@amwater.com>; ExecutiveStaff@Coastal <ExecutiveStaff@coastal.ca.gov>; ExParte, Commissioner@Coastal <CommissionerExParte@coastal.ca.gov>; Padilla, Stephen@Coastal <Stephen.Padilla@coastal.ca.gov>; Brownsey, Donne@Coastal <donne.brownsey@coastal.ca.gov>; Turnbull-Sanders, Effie@Coastal <effie.turnbull-sanders@coastal.ca.gov>; Aminzadeh, Sara@Coastal <sara.aminzadeh@coastal.ca.gov>; Hart, Caryl@Coastal <caryl.hart@coastal.ca.gov>; Howell, Erik@Coastal <erik.howell@coastal.ca.gov>; Uranga, Roberto@Coastal <roberto.uranga@coastal.ca.gov>; Groom, Carole@Coastal <carole.groom@coastal.ca.gov>; ccc@daynabochco.com <ccc@daynabochco.com>; Wilson, Mike@Coastal <mike.wilson@coastal.ca.gov>; Rice, Katie@Coastal <katie.rice@coastal.ca.gov>; Escalante, Linda@Coastal <linda.escalante@coastal.ca.gov>; catherine.stedman@amwater.com <catherine.stedman@amwater.com>; info@watersupplyproject.org <info@watersupplyproject.org>; Energy@Coastal <EORFC@coastal.ca.gov>
**Subject:** Re: - Gordon Mortensen Public Comment on September 2020 Agenda Item undefined 4a - Application No. 9-19-0918 (California American Water Co., Seaside, Monterey Co.) Sent to staff

Comment in Support of the Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project
Case Number: 9-19-0918

Dear Commissioners,

I support the Monterey Water Supply Project to create a desalination plant as a clean, sustainable solution to the water supply crisis in the Monterey Peninsula.

This desalination project is the only viable option to supply our community with a long-term sustainable water source that is capable of supporting affordable housing, economic recovery and restoring the Carmel River and the Seaside basin.

The Monterey Peninsula is a leader in conservation, and for 25 years has been working with federal, state and local agencies to develop an alternate water supply for our community. It is imperative that the water supply needs of the Monterey Peninsula and the environmental issues facing the Carmel River are resolved as quickly as possible.

Please support this desalination project to ensure our water future. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Gordon Mortensen

Street Address: 4153 Crest Rd
City: Pebble Beach
State: CA
Zip Code: 93953

(831) 625-0960
gordonmortensen@comcast.net
73.70.93.248

**Luster, Tom@Coastal**

**From:** Energy@Coastal
**Sent:** Friday, September 04, 2020 9:25 AM
**To:** CalAmMonterey@coastal
**Subject:** Fw: - William Riegel Public Comment on September 2020 Agenda Item undefined 4a - Application No. 9-19-0918 (California American Water Co., Seaside, Monterey Co.) Sent to staff

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**From:** William Riegel <admin@watersupplyproject.org>
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 2, 2020 7:40 PM
**To:** luke.gianni@amwater.com <luke.gianni@amwater.com>; ExecutiveStaff@Coastal <ExecutiveStaff@coastal.ca.gov>; ExParte, Commissioner@Coastal <CommissionerExParte@coastal.ca.gov>; Padilla, Stephen@Coastal <Stephen.Padilla@coastal.ca.gov>; Brownsey, Donne@Coastal <donne.brownsey@coastal.ca.gov>; Turnbull-Sanders, Effie@Coastal <effie.turnbull-sanders@coastal.ca.gov>; Aminzadeh, Sara@Coastal <sara.aminzadeh@coastal.ca.gov>; Hart, Caryl@Coastal <caryl.hart@coastal.ca.gov>; Howell, Erik@Coastal <erik.howell@coastal.ca.gov>; Uranga, Roberto@Coastal <roberto.uranga@coastal.ca.gov>; Groom, Carole@Coastal <carole.groom@coastal.ca.gov>; ccc@daynabochco.com <ccc@daynabochco.com>; Wilson, Mike@Coastal <mike.wilson@coastal.ca.gov>; Rice, Katie@Coastal <katie.rice@coastal.ca.gov>; Escalante, Linda@Coastal <linda.escalante@coastal.ca.gov>; catherine.stedman@amwater.com <catherine.stedman@amwater.com>; info@watersupplyproject.org <info@watersupplyproject.org>; Energy@Coastal <EORFC@coastal.ca.gov>
**Subject:** Re: - William Riegel Public Comment on September 2020 Agenda Item undefined 4a - Application No. 9-19-0918 (California American Water Co., Seaside, Monterey Co.) Sent to staff

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Please support this desalination project to ensure our water future. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

William Riegel

Street Address: 105 LITTLEFIELD RD
City: MONTEREY
State: CA
Zip Code: 93940
Country: United States

(831) 6579044
williamriegel@hotmail.com
73.92.55.213

FARM BUREAU
MONTEREY

1140 Abbott Street, Suite C, Salinas, CA 93901 • PO BOX 1449, Salinas, CA 93902
office (831) 751-3100 • www.montereycfb.com

September 3, 2020

Hon. Steve Padilla, Chair and Commissioners
California Coastal Commission
Att: Tom Luster
455 Market St., Ste. 300
San Francisco, CA 94105

VIA: E-mail to CalAmMonterey@coastal.ca.gov

**RE: Appeal No. A-3-MRA-19-0034; Approve Cal Am Desal Project Permit**

Honorable Chair Padilla and Commissioners:

Monterey County Farm Bureau represents family farmers and ranchers in the interest of protecting and promoting agriculture throughout our County. Since 1917, Farm Bureau strives to improve the ability of those engaged in production agriculture to provide a reliable supply of food and fiber through responsible stewardship of our local resources.

Our organization was an intervening party in the California Public Utilities Commission proceeding for the approval of the Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project (Project) Certificate of Public Convenience & Necessity issued by the commission in October 2018. From the beginning of this regulatory approval process, our organization and others expressed numerous concerns over the source water intake facility to be located at the CEMEX property just north of the City of Marina, and the potential impacts of the Project on the groundwater aquifers upon which our members rely for their livelihoods. Our organization and others actively engaged with California American Water (Cal Am) and other stakeholders to scientifically determine whether and how the Project may affect the groundwater basin and our members' water rights. We formed the Hydrogeologic Working Group to model the groundwater basin and the Project, and pressed Cal Am to make project design and operational modifications to minimize and eliminate impacts to groundwater. We also negotiated agreements to ensure that third party groundwater rights would not be impacted and that the Project would be operated consistent with the Monterey County Water Resources Agency Act.

With this letter, we continue to express our support for the Cal Am desalination facility, and expressly, the issuance of the Coastal Development Permit for the source water intake facility. Monterey County Farm Bureau has a vested interest in the Project and its potential impacts to the groundwater basin, and we are convinced that the scientific record supporting this Project, developed over a seven year period and involving literally dozens of the State's leading hydrogeologists and modelers (independent from Cal Am) undeniably supports approval of the Project.

Background and History

Monterey County Farm Bureau (MCFB) represents 375 family farms and has constituent members that own or manage over 250,000 acres of farm and ranch lands in our County; this represents a substantial portion of the irrigated farmland of the Salinas River watershed area of the Salinas Valley, also known as the 'Salad Bowl of the World.' Producing over

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office (831) 751-3100 • www.montereycfb.com

150 different food products and crops annually, the economic value of these agricultural products exceeded $4.4 billion[1] in 2019, outdistancing all other economic sectors of Monterey County.

Moreover, economic impacts of agricultural activities in Monterey County were updated to $11.7 billion, demonstrating the dependence that the region has on the success of local Agriculture.[2] With this comes the reliance on groundwater for irrigation of the crops that are produced; thus, our organization's keen interest in anything that may impact or harm the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin and its resources.

It was this concern about groundwater resources that caused MCFB to enter into the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) proceeding as an intervener in Spring 2012, shortly after Cal Am filed their petition for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN). MCFB's main concern was the intended placement the source water wells facility directly over the 180-foot aquifer of the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin where it extends out under the Monterey Bay; the protection of water rights, exportation of fresh water from the Salinas Valley aquifer, and seawater intrusion impacts were of paramount concern to our organization and, particularly, to our members who are overlying water rights holders and users in the coastal zone area.

To protect our interests, as part of an initial settlement agreement,[3] MCFB, along with Salinas Valley Water Coalition (SVWC), supported the creation of the Hydrogeologic Working Group (HWG), to work independently on potential impacts the source water wells could have on the Salinas Valley aquifer. An invitation to participate was extended to all interveners of record at the time of the formation of the HWG; only SVWC along with Cal Am participated materially and financially, with support from MCFB.[4] The results of the HWG review process and work was presented in a findings document to the CPUC in 2017.

To address the issue of any freshwater extractions that may come from the source water well facility, MCFB and SVWC initiated discussions with Cal Am and other interveners to develop a return water flow settlement that would satisfy the water rights issue and the Monterey County Water Resource Agency Act (Agency Act) regulatory provisions (i.e. no exportation of groundwater from the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin outside of the basin). This led to a mutually beneficial settlement agreement[5] (Return Water Flow Settlement) where all parties were satisfied with the outcome, including a number of water rights attorneys who crafted the language.



[1] Monterey County Crop Report, produced by County of Monterey Agricultural Commissioner's Office, June 2020.
[2] Economic Contributions of Monterey County Agriculture, produced by County of Monterey Agricultural Commissioner's Office, July 2020.
[3] 'Large Settlement Agreement' submitted to the CPUC by the majority of interveners in July 2013. Interveners participating: California-American Water Company, Citizens for Public Water, City of Pacific Grove, Coalition of Peninsula Businesses, County of Monterey, Division of Ratepayer Advocates, LandWatch Monterey County, Monterey County Farm Bureau, Monterey County Water Resources Agency, Monterey Peninsula Regional Water Authority, Monterey Peninsula Water Management District, Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency (now known as Monterey One Water), Planning and Conservation League Foundation, Salinas Valley Water Coalition, Sierra Club, and Surfrider Foundation.
[4] MCFB did not claim intervener compensation during the CPUC proceeding and could not participate financially in the HWG.
[5] 'Settlement Agreement on MPWSP Desalination Plant Return Water' submitted to the CPUC in June 2016 by California-American Water Company and interveners Coalition of Peninsula Businesses, LandWatch Monterey County, Monterey County Farm Bureau, Monterey County Water Resources Agency, Monterey Peninsula Regional Water Authority, Planning and Conservation League Foundation, and Salinas Valley Water Coalition.

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Water Rights & Source Water

Much has been made of the water rights issues associated with the desalination source water well facility; many community members and activist organizations maintain that any extraction from the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin is a violation of water rights law. This is, in fact, not correct; the Agency Act, while strictly prohibiting the exportation of groundwater extracted from the basin to any other use outside of the basin area itself, does allow for beneficial uses of all extracted water *within* the basin area.

Cal Am admits that there is a reasonable expectation that a small amount of source water extracted for the desalination process will be of a content somewhat less in salinity than normal seawater; this is to be expected because the area of the proposed source water wells is substantially seawater intruded and has been for many decades. Subsurface water in the area north of Marina has been shown on maps of the Monterey County Water Resource Agency as showing higher levels of salinity, and has been confirmed by the number of irrigation wells in the area that are showing elevated salinity levels.[6]

This indicates, as supported in the Environmental Impact Report (FEIR/FEIS) for the CPUC decision, that seawater intruded areas of the subsurface (Dune Sand aquifer) have variable water conditions and quality. In no way is there indication that freshwater from inland areas of the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin will be 'sucked into' the source water cone of impact; contrarily, the hydrologic studies in the FEIR/FEIS indicate that the source water wells, through continuous extractions, may actually improve seawater intrusion by holding this higher salinity water closer to the coast rather than allowing further advancement inland.

As one of the major concerns during the initial stages of this proceeding, MCFB sought to protect the water rights of overlying land owners adjacent to the proposed source water facility. Because of the potential to create a cone of depression in that area, impacts to water rights holders of the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin could create undesirable consequences due to the subsurface extractions. Ultimately, this is not an identified impact to the groundwater basin found in the FEIR/FEIS, and certainly does not impact the City of Marina's water supply wells as those are of some distance away from the source water well facility *and in deeper levels of the aquifer.*

Working with Cal Am in the early stages of the CPUC proceeding, the proposed Project was modified to include multiple monitoring wells to determine groundwater levels in the immediate area of the source water well facility, with information supplied to the Monterey County Water Resources Agency for verification. In addition, mitigation measures to ensure that any impacts occurring in future years of operation of the source water wells facility are in place to protect water right holders; this applies to any overlying landowner or municipal water purveyor with water rights that shows the source water intake extractions are causing or inflicting harm. Thus, the City of Marina's water supply is similarly protected by these monitoring and mitigation measures.

Further, there is no credible evidence that can be supplied to show that either water rights or drinking water supplies of local water users will be impacted by the source water intake wells. The policy discussion of this CCC coastal permit should focus on the facts of this application, not the emotional and political rhetoric that many of the activist organizations use as a tactic to dissuade the issuance of the final permit for this Project. The CCC staff report repeats



[6] Monterey County Water Resources Agency, Seawater Intrusion Monitoring Program webpage with maps: https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/government-links/water-resources-agency/programs/seawater-intrusion-monitoring

many of these unsubstantiated arguments and contends that these are indeed fact when they are clearly not facts as supported by the extensive documentation of this Project. The FEIR/FEIS prepared for the CPUC process is one of the most heavily researched and exhaustive impact reports prepared for any Project of this type, considering many of the issues that all interveners brought before the CPUC in testimony and briefings on the environmental concerns; the Large Settlement Agreement issues were all resolved through this extensive environmental review to the satisfaction of participating intervener organizations.

The monitoring and mitigation measures satisfied the question surrounding groundwater impacts to water rights holders in the coastal zone area of the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin; the Return Water Flow Settlement addresses the remaining water rights issue of exportation of freshwater, as discussed in this next section of this letter.

Return Water Flow Settlement

MCFB entered into negotiations with several interveners (and their attorneys) to create language for the return water flow of fresh water extracted during the source water extraction process for desalination. Cal Am has characterized this fresh water component as approximately 7% or less of the seawater extracted from the Dune Sands aquifer on any given day,[7] and the EIR modeling shows it could be in the range of 1% to 12% with the higher range expected at pumping start up and then lowering overtime.

MCFB's primary concern was with fresh water extraction (really, brackish water due to seawater intrusion) related to the Agency Act which protects the groundwater basin *legislatively* from any water exports. The Agency Act's requirement that all fresh water extracted from the basin must remain in the basin mandates that extracted fresh water must be returned for beneficial use in the basin; the settlement constrains this return flow to be *in-lieu* of other groundwater pumping within the basin. This indicates that the return water flow must supplement (and replace) other supplies within the basin that are sourced from the groundwater itself.

MCFB asserts that the best choices for this return water flow are the Castroville Community Services District (CCSD) that is challenged with degrading groundwater quality, and the Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project (CSIP) that provides irrigation water to 12,000 acres of farmland in the coastal zone where seawater intrusion has made groundwater unusable for crop production. Both of these beneficial uses of return flow water would reduce reliance on marginal quality coastal groundwater and minimize extractions in these areas (*in-lieu* concept in place). In addition, the return flow water would curtail the need for very deep aquifer wells (for both municipal and irrigation uses) in the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin in the coastal zone area, protecting this valuable resource in perpetuity.

Under the Return Water Flow Settlement, water would be delivered to CCSD and CSIP prior to any desalinated water delivered to the Monterey Peninsula; this indicates that Cal Am's source water intake extractions will have a net-zero impact on Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater extractions, and makes the basin whole and the Project legally feasible by avoiding any potential conflicts with the Agency Act. By delivering return water flows to these groundwater basin users prior to the Monterey Peninsula, there is a starting point of 'surplus or credit' avoiding net basin exportation.

The Return Water Flow Settlement contemplates a win-win-win solution for this difficult legal constraint for Cal Am, tangentially benefiting CCSD, CSIP, and the Salinas Valley aquifer. Many in the community have characterized this



[7] Results of the test well and the amount of fresh water extracted are available on the project's website: https://www.watersupplyproject.org/test-well

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settlement action as a subsidizing of drinking water for the CCSD and irrigation water for CSIP, when in fact the *in-lieu* clause of this settlement agreement is simply exchanging one set of extraction circumstances that yields a better quality of water, and maintains the same amount of groundwater extractions overall (an overall goal of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2015). Because of the Agency Act, this assures that the small portions of Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin extractions of brackish water, unusable at that quality for any beneficial use, become a valuable and useable resource of higher quality for the benefit of groundwater basin users currently impacted by seawater intrusion.

The CPUC decision to award the CPCN to Cal Am included the Return Water Flow provisions, which fully satisfies the Agency Act requirements, recognizing that there are multiple wins in this elegant solution. CCC staff fails to recognize the advantages of this multi-benefit solution in their Project analysis.

Hydrogeologic Working Group Findings

At the outset of the HWG meetings, there was skepticism that the source water well facility could be configured in such a way as to avoid severe impacts to the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin. Concerns focused on exasperating seawater intrusion in the north Marina coast area by establishing a large cone of depression, triggering in-land underground water flows from further distances within the basin, thereby violating both overlying landowner water rights and the Agency Act.

The intent was to find the best science, through an independent review by experts in their field of hydrology with specific experience and knowledge of the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin, to determine the potential impacts of the source water well production. Collaborating with Cal Am's experts allowed for frank and honest discussion of the issues and review of available data, and the result was a report to the CPUC that indicated that brackish water will be removed from the shallow aquifer through the source water extraction process, improving seawater intrusion in the area of the source wells. The FEIR/FEIS supports these findings of the HWG and corroborates the positive impacts that the source water extraction process could have on the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin and seawater intrusion.

Detractors of the desalination process would place harm on any water resources used for this Project, including extractions from the historically contaminated Dune Sand aquifer; the CPUC findings do not support this hyperbole. In fact, both the State Water Resources Control Board and the CCC recommended the subsurface well intakes as the optimal process for extracting source waters for desalination, noting that this virtually eliminated the entrainment issue associated with open ocean water intakes. After eight years of data collection, including numerous years of test well operation, the directives put forward by these two State agencies were upheld demonstrating that source waters could be extracted with minimal impacts to surrounding groundwater and other environmental concerns.

It seems incongruent that the CCC staff, as one of the agencies with a sub-surface intake policy for desalination extraction wells, would then confuse issues by recommending a denial of the permit that utilizes the very extraction process the policy recommends. The environmental issues listed in the staff report are, at best, minimal in impact and do not adequately reflect the policy of the CCC.

After careful review of the test well data, and the findings of the HWG, MCFB moved to a conclusion that the desalination source water wells facility portion of the Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project can be operated with

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*no impact or less than significant impact* to the Salinas Valley basin's groundwater, as supported in the FEIR/FEIS.[8] The evidence is clear.

Portfolio Project Approach of Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project

When initially entering into the CPUC proceeding as an intervener, MCFB understood the Project description to include a portfolio of projects, to ensure not only adequate supply but redundant operational protections for service disruptions. This portfolio included desalination, aquifer storage and recovery (ASR), and reclaimed water from the Monterey One Water purification project (Pure Water Monterey). MCFB is on record as supporting this portfolio approach at a number of occasions throughout the CPUC proceeding.

Several intervener and community organizations, and now CCC staff, are now calling for reliance on a single water source for the majority of the Monterey Peninsula's water supply through expansion of the Pure Monterey Water project. CCC staff fails to recognize that the original portion of this project is over a year behind schedule, over budget, and has yet to deliver any potable water supply to the Monterey Peninsula (and only recently completed the reserve portion of the water supply to be stored in the Monterey sub-basin). Due to these key points, the expansion of the Pure Water Monterey project was effectively put on hold by the Monterey One Water Board of Directors earlier this year. There is no physical demonstration yet that the Pure Water Monterey project can deliver on the production numbers promised.

Moreover, two State agencies have formalized their support of the desalination Project (State Water Resources Control Board and CPUC) through extensive review of all issues and environmental concerns over the past eight years. This stands in stark contrast to the CCC staff recommendation that now goes against those two State agencies' support position when the policies for desalination are aligned and the applicant has complied with those same policies, at considerable expense.

Regardless of claims to the amounts of water the Pure Water Monterey project or its expansion could ultimately supply, the key point for MCFB is that the Monterey Peninsula would be solely dependent on a single water project to provide potable water for the majority of its demand. It remains our contention that Pure Water Monterey source waters are interruptible due to a number of considerations, and any one of these interruptions could impact the ability of the project to delivery on its promise.

Thus, reliance on a single water supply project is a short-sighted approach to solving a long-term water supply for a region that has been challenged to find adequate water supplies for decades.

By relying on a portfolio approach, redundancy of projects would ensure that any one project that fails to meet its supply demands could be supplied by another project of the portfolio; if any of these projects needs to contemplate a longer service interruption, other projects of the portfolio could plan ahead to meet demand, or meet demand in emergency situations.

MCFB supports the portfolio approach as the best way to ensure that the Monterey Peninsula maintains an adequate and reliable water supply for decades to come. Detractors from this portfolio approach only seek to control growth and



[8] "MPWSP source water would include some brackish groundwater from the SVGB." Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project FEIR/FEIS, Chapter 2.5.1 Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin Return Water, page 2-23.

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development by using water as a weapon, condemning the Monterey Peninsula community to several more decades of intermittent water shortages and a lack of affordable and market rate housing development, lots of record, and change of use for economic expansion.

Environmental Concerns with the CEMEX Location

Our expressed concern is that CCC staff puts forward a logic that the CEMEX sand mining site, already *disturbed earth*, can be fully restored to its pristine condition prior to the advent of the mining facility, or presumably, European settlement of the Monterey coastal region. This rationalization continues to negate the development of many necessary coast public projects, whether roadway capacity expansion, facilities that enhance recreational use, or in this instance, the development of a reliable water supply resource.

The CEMEX site was the chosen location for this type of source water well facility as it is already disturbed earth with an established access road and other infrastructure in place. To put forward an ideal concept that the entire CEMEX site can be restored to pristine condition, mainly for recreation, fails to take advantage of the availability of current conditions.

We find it very incongruent that CCC staff would recommend denying the very type of source water well facility, on a plot of disturbed earth, when agency policy supports multiple public benefits. Recreational use and other restoration processes can certainly be worked around the small wellhead structures this Project would eventually install and utilize.

We urge consideration by CCC Commissioners that the CEMEX site is indeed the ideal location for this type of source water well facility, including the hydrologic features that lie directly beneath.

CPCN Issuance

In their decision to approve the Project and issue the CPCN, the CPUC Commissioners affirmed that the groundwater basin surrounding the source water intake wells would be adequately protected from harm; monitoring wells will ensure that early signs of any impacts will be detected. The FEIR/FEIS was exhaustive on this subject and represents a substantial amount of work involving historical data and modeling. The Return Water Flow Settlement ensures that any freshwater removed as a result of source water extractions will be returned to the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin *in-lieu*. Moreover, the Project is drought-proof.

MCFB supported the issuance of the CPCN; our concerns have been satisfied to a positive outcome within that proceeding.

Conclusion

So, why does MCFB care so much if the permit for the source water well facility is issued or not? Being good neighbors and friends to those on the Monterey Peninsula who continue to argue over their water resources, our organization knows full well what a long-term, reliable water supply solution means to the community overall. Our experience with water supply development in the Salinas Valley stands in marked contrast to the acrimony that the Monterey Peninsula continues to retread each time a water supply project is proposed. Voting down a replacement dam and a prior desalination facility ensured that the acrimony would continue for many more decades and limit any development due to the cease-and-desist order in place.

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The truth is that any delay in finding a long-term water supply solution for the Monterey Peninsula continues these arguments into the next generation; the greater economic vitality of the entire County is dependent on having adequate water supplies for both agricultural irrigation, tourism, economic growth, and housing development. A lack of a solution that provides these resources for the coming decades will only continue the infighting that has made the Monterey Peninsula the dysfunctional area of the Monterey County economy.

Salinas Valley landowners and water users have spent multiple decades and hundreds of millions of dollars developing their water resources, building two reservoirs (Nacimiento and San Antonio), the Salinas Valley Water Project, and the Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project. These projects have been constructed and financed by bringing together the greater community to manage water resources in a sustainable manner, allowing for a robust agricultural sector to flourish and expand. The Salinas Valley community has taken charge of their water resource destiny and successfully developed a reliable water supply system.

The Monterey Peninsula has continued to ignore potential projects as solutions to their water supply resources in these same intervening decades. Fighting over these projects has wasted hundreds of millions of dollars and forces the solution into the future where costs will certainly continue to escalate. Continued acrimony over various aspects of the Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project only serve as delays to finding a solution. It's time that the Monterey Peninsula's water supply he made reliable by meeting current and future demand, and that Monterey County has significant and stable water resources for all regions of our County. Now is the time for a positive decision by the final State agency to support a reliable, well designed, and beneficial water supply project.

MCFB supports the issuance of the Coastal Development Permit for the source water intake wells of the Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project in the coastal Sand Dune aquifer of Monterey County.

It's time to move this desalination Project across the finish line and ensure that the Monterey Peninsula has a long-term, reliable and redundant water supply for decades into the future. Reliance on a single water resource should be eliminated as a choice in such an important region for environmental, residential, commercial, and tourism sectors when a portfolio of projects can ensure that the community will not have to suffer through another period of water shortages and a continuing cease-and-desist order. This will then place the Monterey Peninsula on the same level of sustainable water supply that the Salinas Valley basin has invested in and assured for itself.

MCFB thanks the CCC Commissioners for their thoughtful consideration of this Coastal Development Permit; it's time to conclude the endless acrimony and move forward with a reliable water supply resource for the Monterey Peninsula.

Sincerely,

Norman C. Groot
Executive Director

cc: California Governor Gavin Newsom