

BRC/MJQ
WR 2009-0060
STATE WATER RESOURCES
CONTROL BOARD
2016 JUL -7 AM 10:15
CITY OF WATER RIGHTS
SACRAMENTO

Chair Felecia Marcus
State Water Resources Control Board
PO Box 2000
Sacramento CA 95812-2000



July 4, 2016

Comment Regarding the Cal Am Cease and Desist Order (CDO) WR 2009-0060, Preliminary Recommendations Document from the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB).

Dear Felecia Marcus,

I am a Cal Am ratepayer here on the Monterey Peninsula. I have been following water events and issues closely for the past four years because of the steeply rising cost of our water. The community has typically not been invited to weigh in on this Cease and Desist Order and yet we are the ones affected. Thank you for finally allowing the public to comment on our situation.

First of all, we owe a great debt to our local water watch dog, Public Water Now. They have provided us with the background and research to understand our water issues. I think they have an approach to holding Cal Am accountable that will work.

Most of the forty thousand households that Cal Am serves here have no idea how badly Cal Am has mismanaged our water with decades of illegal water production, nor the amount of profit their shareholders have earned in doing so. Cal Am hides their failures behind the California drought as an excuse. However some of us are aware of their record. It appears to many who follow this, that Cal Am is playing a game with the SWRCB. How long can they draw this out and how much profit can they generate while doing so?

Are you aware that under Cal Am the Monterey Peninsula currently has the 9th most expensive water in the country according to this national survey?

https://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/sites/default/files/report_state_of_public_water.pdf
But we have also achieved some of the highest conservation levels in the state. Here's my personal example to give you an idea of how ratepayers have been affected so far. Mine is a household of 3 on one acre of land in Carmel.

In July 2008 I used 19,500 gallons and I paid \$184. Seven years later, in July 2015 I used 17,500 gallons, but I paid \$784. **That's \$600 more monthly for 2000 gallons less. Under Cal Am my conservation efforts were rewarded with a 477% increase!**

This year is even worse as Cal Am has been allowed by the CPUC to discontinue the summer water allotment for large lots and acreage. My bill for May 2015 was \$476 for 14,885 gallons. My bill for May 2016 was \$536 for 13,613 gallons. Again my conservation efforts in saving 1272 gallons a month, over last year's use, were rewarded with a bigger bill.

My point is that so far, Cal Am has profited handsomely, while we have been punished for our exemplary conservation successes. This is the wrong strategy and I hope you can see the injustice and ineffectiveness of the current approach to Cal Am's illegal profiting from of our water.

As you can see, I'm doing my part to conserve, but most drought tolerant plants do require some summer water to keep them alive. Not taking into consideration lot size and acreage is unfair. Water rights typically go with land use. Because we are a partly rural community with large lots and acreage, about 8000 households on the Peninsula have summer water use in tiers 3, 4, and 5. We are the ones who have been paying these extraordinary Cal Am bills with no end in sight.

Our water bills contain many surcharges for Cal Am's past failures. They have managed our water poorly. Certainly we can expect more setbacks and failures from them. So it falls to you to find the right incentives to keep them on track.

Cal Am, and our development-minded politicians got us into this mess. What would be achieved by cutting our water supply when Cal Am misses a milestone? You would only be punishing the ratepayers with water rationing and even higher prices. Cal Am would be untouched. The CPUC would simply allow them to charge more for less water, as they are currently doing.

Please consider the recommendations from Public Water Now as you consider the 5 year extension plan. This is the best idea I've heard. If you force Cal Am to charge us less per gallon, as a penalty for any milestone they miss, you will finally be providing real incentive to Cal Am and rewarding our conservation efforts at the same time. Cal Am is driven solely by profit, so any incentive must be aimed directly at their profits.

Please penalize those responsible for over drafting the river. Most of us had no say in this and did not know what Cal Am was doing for the past 20 years. We aren't the big developers and politicians who have profited from this at the expense of the environment.

Sincerely, 

Melodie Chrislock
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