



# ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COALITION FOR WATER

October 19, 2009

Dear Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board members:

I am writing on behalf of San Jerardo and the Environmental Justice Coalition for Water (EJCW). EJCW advocates for the water needs of low-income communities and communities of color throughout California. We have worked with the community of San Jerardo for the past several years, supporting their efforts to obtain clean, safe drinking water and install affordable wastewater system upgrades. We like to thank you for your continued efforts to support the residents of San Jerardo.

We are writing to express our strong support for the San Jerardo Cooperative's Wastewater Treatment Project application to the Cleanup and Abatement Program. The funds from the program will provide critical support for much needed upgrades in San Jerardo's wastewater system. Furthermore, it will allow San Jerardo to continue operating its' wastewater system and thus maintain affordable wastewater rates.

San Jerardo residents are facing extremely high water rates to cover the operation and maintenance costs of a new well, which will provide potable water. For years, residents were served water with extremely high rates of nitrates and trichloropropane. The County of Monterey eventually installed an emergency water filtration system, which they have been operating for the past several years. While the County and Department of Health Services have secured sources of funding to construct a new well, the high costs of running the system will be passed onto the low-income families of San Jerardo.

San Jerardo has a long history of efficiently running their wastewater system. The system is now in need of upgrades, and the Cooperative is poised to make the necessary changes in the system. However, they are only able to do so if they obtain funds such as those in the Cleanup and Abatement Program. If San Jerardo does not receive these funds, the County may take over the wastewater system and impose yet another costly monthly fee. The residents of San Jerardo simply cannot afford the additional \$65 dollars in wastewater fees the County would put in place, on top of water bills that are likely to exceed \$100 dollars when the new drinking water system is done.

EJCW recommends prioritizing the funding of San Jerardo's wastewater system, with San Jerardo as the operator, through the Cleanup and Abatement Program. The funds will provide much-needed funds to upgrade the wastewater system and avoid high monthly wastewater rates.

Thank you for your continued support for the community of San Jerardo. Sincerely,

Amy Vanderwarker  
Project Manager  
Environmental Justice Coalition for Water

Supplemental Sheet-Item No. 12  
October 23, 2009 Meeting  
Public Comments re: Monterey Co.  
& San Jerardo Cooperative  
Attachment 2