

**DIXON CHAPTER  
SOLANO COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION  
P.O. Box 31  
Dixon, California 95620**

April 18, 2014

Karl Longley, Chairman  
California State Water Quality Control Board  
Central Valley Region  
6014 North Cedar Avenue  
Fresno, California 93710

Mr. Longley,

I am writing to you today as the Vice President of the Dixon Chapter of the Solano County Taxpayers Association in regard to a situation which I believe needs to be brought to your attention. I do this despite having been warned of the working relationship between you and the executive director of the CVRSWQB. However, if we are truly looking for solutions, you need this information unadulterated by your staff.

I have spoken to you at Board meetings in Sacramento, testified in front of the Little Hoover Commission on March 27, 2008, and been in the audience at your board meetings on various occasions. As I believe you are not receiving the appropriate details from your staff on various projects, specifically your executive director Pamela Creedon due to her prejudices from past dealings with our group, I am sending you this letter as an accompaniment to the letter our group has sent to Bob Pontureri at the SRF loan division.

The city of Dixon has been in the process of approving an "activated sludge project" despite its rejection by their advisory committee. The city council's solution to this dilemma? disbandment of the committee. We have been contacted by a company from Illinois, In-Pipe Technologies, which offers biological and chemical solutions to removing the constituents of concern to your agency. This is proven technology with a wide range of climatological environs (from Alaska to Malaysia) as well as flow ranges.

Rather than embracing a technology which is much less costly and actually removes constituents such as Boron that is unaffected by the activated sludge process, your staff continues to support this older technology because it is "proven" within the state of California. Your staff also supports it because it was proposed by our consultant.

Faulty science has been the past attribute hung on your Board's staff. The decision to go in this direction was done in a less than open and transparent manner with the Dixon Chapter finding out about it only after the agreement had been reached. During hearings on the project, I pointed out that even the consultant's charts and graphs showed little benefit in removing Boron, your staff's constituent of concern du jour, from the final effluent to be percolated into first recoverable groundwater.

As is stated in the accompanying letter, the Dixon Chapter will lead a Referendum and Initiative to stop the rate increase funding this poor solution. We endorsed a prior rate increase which was to fund the current rate payers' obligations for structural

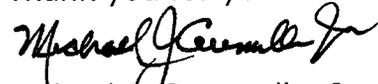
improvements at the treatment plant. As those funds have been collected and this increase was only to be for three years, we are now considering dropping the rates back to where they were as our council refuses to act in a fiscally prudent manner.

The relationship between your Board and our group after the LHC testimony improved drastically as your staff's counter advice provided by Creedon was ignored. The city of Dixon has not stood still as the majority of members of the Citizens' Wastewater Committee was comprised of Dixon Chapter members. We fought to get the right to ban self-regenerating salt discharging water softeners and got the city council to pass an ordinance once that State law was passed. We also put in monitoring wells directly around our treatment plant to ascertain without a doubt exactly what was happening to first recoverable ground water as well as its "background" quality. Unfortunately time seems to have a way of dismissing progress with a return to unresponsive and secretive mechanisms of governance.

On a final note, I noticed at the last meeting I attended that I was being forced to fill out a speaker card in order to address your board. As your people correctly stated, I did not have to "sign in" in order to attend the meeting. However, forcing a person to "identify" him/herself in order to speak abrogates that person's right to anonymity. The message needs to be more important than the messenger. Your agency is not the only one demanding to know the identity of speakers. I intend to address this on a more local level before proceeding on to State agencies. The simple remedy is to query the audience "is there anyone who would like to speak to this agenda item?"

Hopefully this letter opens your eyes to the inner workings of your staff, as well as irresponsible governments or self-aggrandizing consultants, promoting projects much as they did in the past which we similarly got our citizens to reject. That resulted in a \$220,000 fine, which was both inappropriate and retaliatory. I don't want to see the city of Dixon or your Board in that same scenario in the near future.

Thank you for your consideration,



Michael J. Ceremello, Jr.

Vice President

Dixon Chapter, Solano County Taxpayers Association

P.O. Box 31

Dixon, California 95620



# SOLANO COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION

## DIXON CHAPTER

P.O. Box 31

Dixon, CA 95620

<dixonchapter@yahoo.com>

April 1, 2014

Bob Pontureri, Supervisor, Wastewater Division  
State Revolving Fund & Special Programs / SRF Unit  
1001 I Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Via Fax & Mail

Mr. Pontureri,

I am the President of the Dixon Chapter of the Solano County Taxpayers Association. My group is extremely active in governmental affairs in the city of Dixon as well as any where else we are needed. The city of Dixon has once again refused to listen to its community members and my group specifically in their headlong plunge toward another unnecessary and scientifically dubious project mainly designed to placate the State Water Quality Control Board. We look at the proposed "activated sludge treatment plant" project as simply "doing something to be doing something".

It is our understanding that the city of Dixon applied for a State Revolving Fund (SRF) loan in December of 2013 and is expecting to hear from you in the next month or so. We, the Dixon Chapter, are informing you that we intend to eliminate the funding to repay any loan your agency is contemplating to the city of Dixon. Therefore, it would be inadvisable to move forward until the referendum and initiative processes are conclusively and finally decided. We are aware of current litigation and case law where citizens have attempted to roll back rates after loans have been made. To address this, we are informing you before you commit funds to the city of Dixon.

The Dixon Chapter supported a rate increase in 2008 designed to meet the obligations of current rate payers to address the "head works" and associated projects. This rate was to last for three years and then be reconsidered. We, the current ratepayers, have met our obligations and the city is attempting to put new development's responsibilities on the backs of our taxpayers. The point is we, the Dixon Chapter, do not say no if projects are appropriate.

Our group does not sit idle. We have attended meetings and addressed the Regional Water Quality Board. We have met with staff and the Executive Director of the Sacramento Valley Regional Water Quality Board and in 2008 we testified before the Little Hoover Commission during a public hearing on California's Regional Water Quality Control Boards' responsiveness to stakeholder groups.

Before responding to this project with our considerations, I would like to give you a little history. The State Water Board agreed to another "band aid" solution project back in 2005. That moniker was given to it by professionals within the agency itself. Our city government, including the council and city staff, agreed to piping effluent water some seven miles south of town to percolate into first recoverable ground water at a site supposedly with saltier ground water than exists under our current percolation ponds. That was an incorrect assumption based on test wells no where near the site.

This solution was to cost the citizens of Dixon some \$40 million. It would have taken no constituents out of the water stream. The activated sludge process likewise is a solution agreed to by city staff and the State Water Board agents and was only presented to the public, again, after the agreement was met. It eliminates only nitrates while preventing evaporation of water essentially "diluting" the final effluent concentrations. Executive director Pamela Creedon of the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board has stated in print that "dilution is not the solution". They don't have to pay for their foolishness. We do.

The city initiated the 218 process to triple sewer rates in 2006. While there were not enough protests to stop this unwise decision at this point, we took it upon ourselves to gather signatures for a petition to roll back sewer rates thereby de-funding the project. When that was successful, the State Water Board in their infinite

wisdom decided to fine our city for not complying with the cease and desist order in the amount of \$220,000. Our city, again unwisely, decided not to appeal the decision.

Due to the situation that was created, the Dixon Chapter suggested to the city council the creation of an advisory committee comprised of at least 50% membership from our organization to come up with new solutions, such as actually putting in monitoring wells surrounding the wastewater treatment facility so we would know exactly what our impact was on the first recoverable water.

In addition, it was our committee which fought for the right to ban self regenerating salt discharging water softeners. That project alone took more salt out of our city's effluent than achieved in any city anywhere else. After many successes and while waiting on the water board to give the city its final effluent limits (those aren't even expected until mid 2016 or 2018 dependent on findings from the CV-SALTS consortium), the newly elected city council ignorantly dissolved this committee because its advice and positions were in opposition once again to their latest foray into not solving anything but evaporation.

We have explained all of this to our elected officials and to water board agents. The water board has even gone so far as to claim that final effluent limits have nothing to do with our C&DO compliance. We were on a two track program. One was to continue as we are if we weren't found to be polluting and the other was to go to further treatment. Our consultant, Stantec, has told us that the data provided by the test wells show we are not contaminating first recoverable groundwater in the area and that the State should raise its proposed final effluent constituent levels based on Stantec's findings.

In addition, we recently found that there are other biological treatment possibilities being employed elsewhere. Our city council is not open to exploring all options and that is a fault we intend to address. One such company is *In Pipe*, <http://www.in-pipe.com/>. My vice president, Michael Ceremello, spoke with you last Friday and relayed your responses.

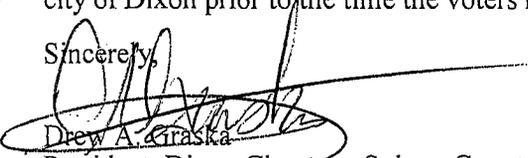
We have just been informed through a public records' request, that an email exists with a response from Stantec about In Pipe's technology and its efficacy. As Mr. Ceremello was a councilman at the time this email was generated, he is wondering why the technology and consideration of this alternative was "hidden" from himself and his fellow councilmen. It also explains your "parroting" of Stantec's points. Considering that In Pipe's technology has worked in climate extremes from Alaska to Malaysia, we are looking forward to a full blown presentation by the company at a hopefully extremely near term council meeting as requested by Vice Mayor Thom Bogue.

It has also come to our attention that there are State Revolving Fund monies available for "recycled water" projects. As our effluent would require further treatment to eliminate E. Coli and other potential toxins, we would be looking at moving to a tertiary treatment process at even greater cost if the biological treatment suggested by the In Pipe company was not employed. This would further add to our rates and is unnecessary in our view.

The outcome of the 218 process for the current rate increase generated over 2200 protests, some of which were disallowed by the city clerk. Considering we needed only 500 more protests than what we collected to have stopped this cold, and the fact we did not reach 40 percent of our population for various reasons including the improper notification process the city utilized, when this becomes a ballot issue the outcome will demonstrate the 80 percent disapproval for this rate increase which we experienced. Remarkably, even after a month of this being in the news, some were still not even aware the increase was to happen.

I want to reaffirm our position one last time. We will take this to the ballot box. Any funding given to the city of Dixon prior to the time the voters have their say will be a distinctly unwise choice on your part.

Sincerely,



Drew A. Giraska

President, Dixon Chapter - Solano County Taxpayers Association

cc: State Senator Lois Wolk; Assemblywoman Mariko Yamada; Little Hoover Commission  
Pamela Creedon, Executive Director Central Valley Water Quality Control Board.  
John Russell, Fund Manager SWRCB Division of Financial Assistance  
Wennifer Fua, Project Manager Clean Water State Revolving Fund Program(CWSRF)  
John Williams, President and Chief Executive Officer In-Pipe Technology  
Dixon Tribune, Vacaville Reporter, Dixon's Independent Voice