

January 20, 2017

State of California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Central Coast Region
Attn: Ms. Tammie Olson, Clerk to the Board
895 Aerovista Place, Suite 101
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Subject: **1/26-27/17 BOARD MEETING:** Executive Officer's Report to the Regional Board regarding the Upper Llagas Creek Flood Protection Project

Dear Ms. Olson:

It is my pleasure to write a letter in support of the Board's staff recommendation for approval of the 401 Water Quality Certification for the Upper Llagas Creek Flood Protection Project (Project). The Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD), as the Project Applicant, submitted an application for Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification for the Project that pursuant to the California Code of Regulations Title 23 §3856 [CCR 23 §3856] has been deemed complete by Board staff.

The Project was initiated in 1954 by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (formally known as the Soil Conservation Service) where approximately 60 percent of the construction of the Project was completed in the 1980's. Until the Project is completed, public safety will continue to be at risk and damages from flooding will continue to occur. Past damages from flooding have occurred in 1937, 1955, 1958, 1962, 1963, 1969, 1982, 1986, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2002, 2008, 2009, 2011, and most recently on January 8, 2017. After decades of Project delays, primarily due to lack of funding, the Project is at last anticipating a start of construction in 2017.

The Project has widespread local, state, and federal support. Public comments on the 2013 Draft EIR and 2015 Draft EIS did not raise any opposition to the Project. In 2000 and again in 2012, local voters have approved bond measures (2000, 2012) to support funding in excess of \$56 million for the Project. The Project will provide one-percent flood protection to more than 1,100 homes and more than 500 commercial and industrial buildings within the City of Morgan Hill. This capital improvement Project, approximately 13.9 miles in length, will incur most of the impacts during, and for only a few years after, construction. SCVWD staff appreciates the Board's staff participation for the last five (5) years in the development of the Project's design and mitigation to achieve a Project that is beneficial to both the environment and the community.

In conclusion, Santa Clara Valley Water District urges the Regional Board to fully support your staff's recommendation to allow the Executive Officer following the standard process to issue a 401 Water Quality Certification as expeditiously as possible.

Sincerely,



Norma J. Camacho
Interim Chief Executive Officer

cc: Chair John Varela, Jim Fiedler, Katherine Oven, Stephen Ferranti

