

**COMMENT LETTER 50 - RUSSIAN RIVER REGION VISITORS BUREAU, JAMES
SORRELLS (SEPTEMBER 24, 1996), RECEIVED SEPTEMBER 24, 1996**

Response to Comment 50-1

Comment Summary: The comment states that the EIR does not adequately address the potential impact on tourism of increasing discharge into the Russian River.

Refer to Master Response 7, located in Section 6.2 of this document, regarding impacts to the tourist economy.

Response to Comment 50-2

Comment Summary: The comment states that the Draft EIR/EIS acknowledges that additional discharges and runoff from development may increase the possibility of flooding.

The comment correctly summarizes the conclusion of the cumulative analysis in Section 4.4, Surface Water Hydrology (see page 4.4-34). The Draft EIR/EIS includes Mitigation Measure 2.5.10: Discharge Prohibition During Flood Stage (refer to page 2-137), which is designed to ensure that the project does not contribute to cumulative flood impacts.

Response to Comment 50-3

Comment Summary: The comment states that the Draft EIR/EIS acknowledges that publicity and education may not convince the public that additional discharges to the Russian River will not make the River unhealthy and unsafe.

Refer to page 4.18-45 of the Draft EIR/EIS, for the full text of the discussion, which states that “Based on the assessment of the factors affecting the Russian River tourism economy, it is evident that publicity regarding events such as the floods and discharge, rather than the event itself, can have the most significant impact on the local tourism economy. Therefore, increasing the discharge of the reclaimed water may not impact the local tourism economy if it is accompanied by educational information and appropriate publicity. The success of publicity campaigns is hard to predict, but it will be important to publicize accurate information about the timing of the discharge season and the high quality of reclaimed water.” Refer also to Master Response 7, located in Section 6.2 of this document, regarding tourism.

Response to Comment 50-4

Comment Summary: The comment states that flooding or negative public perception will have an impact on tourism and that nowhere in the EIR is there an economic analysis of that impact.

Refer to Master Response 7, located in Section 6.2 of this document, regarding impacts to the tourist economy. Also refer to Response to Comment 50-2.

Response to Comment 50-5

Comment Summary: The comment asserts that with increased Russian River discharge, the overall effect on Sonoma County's economy would be extremely detrimental, including diminished property values; loss of sales, transient occupancy and property taxes; job loss and business failure.

Although the Draft EIR/EIS did not separately evaluate all of the factors listed in the comment, Section 4.18 of the Draft EIR/EIS concludes that Alternative 5A (Russian River Discharge) would have an overall negative impact in the County based upon total income and employment.

Response to Comment 50-6

Comment Summary: The comment requested the names of those resort owners who were interviewed in the EIR economic section and what were the questions asked.

Refer to Master Response 7, located in Section 6.2 of this document, regarding impacts to the tourist economy.

Response to Comment 50-7

Comment Summary: The comment states that the Russian River Region Visitors Bureau has conducted a survey of owners of accommodations and real estate professionals. The results will be made available to the public and press in the future.

Refer to Master Response 7, located in Section 6.2 of this document, regarding impacts to the tourist economy.