

**COMMENT LETTER 65 - MARY BLANCHARD COLETTI (SEPTEMBER 26, 1996),
RECEIVED OCTOBER 1, 1996**

Response to Comment 65-1

Comment Summary: The comment refers to Table 1-13 on pages 1-46 through 1-57 of the Draft EIR/EIS and states that the term “may” is not appropriate in the impact statements when impacts are known to occur.

The use of the term “may” is appropriate for the impact statements since all of the alternatives are being evaluated and may or may not have specific environmental impacts. The body of the table indicates whether each alternative results in the specific impact.

Response to Comment 65-2

Comment Summary: The comment indicates that all dams are sited on active earthquake faults.

As indicated in the Draft EIR/EIS on page 4.3-71, none of the reservoir sites is located within an Alquist Priolo earthquake fault zone, and fault rupture is not considered to be a significant hazard. Refer also to Response to Comment 90-29.

Response to Comment 65-3

Comment Summary: The comment states that condemnation of land for a dam would result in loss of land and property, and asks at what cost and to whom.

The Draft EIR/EIS, in Section 3.3 (page 3.3-19) recognizes that condemnation of land for a dam and reservoir may be necessary. Section 4.18 of the Draft EIR/EIS (page 4.18-35) recognizes that a loss of homes would occur at six of the potential reservoir sites. Table 3.4-1 on page 3.4-2 of the Draft EIR/EIS identifies the estimated acquisition costs for each of the alternatives. These acquisition costs are part of the total project cost estimates, which are the basis for the analysis of additional demand fees and service charges. To pay for the cost of the project, additional demand fees and service charges would be levied against ratepayers in the Subregional System member entities. A discussion of these additional demand fees and service charges is contained in Section 4.18 of the Draft EIR/EIS (pages 4.18-22 to 4.18-24).

Response to Comment 65-4

Comment Summary: The comment asserts that replacement costs for property such as housing, barns and other related facilities is exorbitant, and asks at what costs and to whom. The comment also asks the same questions about the cost of development permits.

Section 2.2 of the Draft EIR/EIS (page 2-60) states that the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970 (Public Law 91-646) will govern

all of the acquisition and displacement actions related to the Project, and that compensation of affected property owners and businesses shall be agreed upon prior to construction of the Project. These will be part of the total Project costs, although the specific type and amount of costs are not known at this point. The Project cost estimates contained in Appendix D-30 (Alternative Projects Construction Cost Estimate) of the Draft EIR/EIS include a 25 percent contingency to cover unknown Project costs, one of which would be relocation and replacement costs.

Response to Comment 65-5

Comment Summary: The comment asks who would be responsible for payment of back taxes associated with cancellation of Williamson Act Contracts.

The City of Santa Rosa would be responsible for payment of any taxes that may be due for any parcel or portion of a parcel for which the Williamson Act contract must be canceled.

Response to Comment 65-6

Comment Summary: The comment states that Williamson Act contract cancellation for reservoirs should not be allowed because other options are available, and recommends double piping systems for flushing toilets and for urban irrigation.

Additional reclamation of any type, either urban or agricultural, would require construction of storage to allow reclaimed water that is currently discharged to the Russian River during the winter months to be stored for summer use. The City currently reclaims all of the water produced during the summer months. Requirements for Williamson Act contract cancellation are discussed starting on page 4.2-2 of the Draft EIR/EIS.

Double piping systems are a form of urban irrigation. The City of Santa Rosa already has an urban irrigation program, and both the West County and South County alternatives include urban irrigation. The pipelines serving the urban irrigation sites could also provide reclaimed water for other users, although only irrigation use is proposed as a part of the Project.

Response to Comment 65-7

Comment Summary: The comment asks how much the increased service charge for wastewater will be. The comment also asks about the costs to homeowners getting rid of wastewater and the cost to wastewater users.

Table 4.18-13 on page 4.18-34 of the Draft EIR/EIS identifies the estimated additional service charges, by jurisdiction, for a typical single family residence between 1996 and 2017. Section 4.18 (page 4.18-22) also describes the methodology for estimating these charges. The project cost data used to determine these charges includes all of the costs of

providing reclaimed water to the end users, including City management and monitoring of the irrigation program. These costs do not include on-site irrigation systems and equipment for individual users. Because specific agricultural or urban irrigators have not been identified at this time, no cost estimates for on-site facilities can be prepared.

Response to Comment 65-8

Comment Summary: The comment states that insurance companies may not insure properties in close proximity to dam sites and asks who will carry liability insurance, at what cost and to whom.

Insurance companies would continue to carry existing homeowner's policies without a rate change. However, any damage resulting from dam failure (i.e., flooding) would not be covered unless the homeowner has flood insurance. Flood insurance can be purchased through most of the major homeowner's insurance companies. In consulting with various major homeowner's insurance companies, the cost of flood insurance varies from \$140 to \$500 a year, depending upon the type of coverage and desired deductible. Refer to Response to Comment 31-5 regarding the City's responsibility in the event of a potential dam failure.

Response to Comment 65-9

Comment Summary: The comment asks what the noise level guarantees will be, who is liable if noise levels are greater than predicted, and if noise will affect cows' production of milk.

The Draft EIR/EIS does not provide noise level guarantees. Impact 13.6.2 is significant for Alternatives 2, 3, and 4, and, while substantial mitigation is recommended in Mitigation Measure 2.3.17: Pump Station Noise Control, on page 2-93, it is not sufficient to guarantee a reduction in noise to a level below significance.

A qualified noise engineer will assist in the final design of the pump stations. In the final design, a specification for noise emission will be developed by the noise engineer. The noise level will be guaranteed by the contractor/vendor based on the noise emission specification. The City of Santa Rosa will review final design plans of proposed pump stations to ensure that all noise control measures have been incorporated. The contractor/vendor will be responsible for the noise performance of the pumps. Cost for noise mitigation measures will be paid for by the City of Santa Rosa.

Studies of aircraft noise have addressed effects of noise on farm-raised animals, including dairy cattle and milk production, sheep, pigs, and horses. Research suggests that there was no evidence indicating any harmful effects of aircraft noise on the animals (Bond 1970). Another survey was conducted at eight Air Force bases that had dairy herds located within three miles of their runways to see if there were any measurable effects from aircraft noise. The survey obtained data on the daily milk deliveries from 182 herds located within the three mile airdrome perimeter. The data did not indicate any evidence

that jet overflights had an effect on the milk production of the herds (Parker and Bayley 1960). The noise generated by the pump stations would not be as loud as jet overflights within three miles of the runway. Therefore, no effect of noise on cows production of milk is expected.

References

Bond, J. 1970. *Noise - Its Effects on the Physiology and Behavior of Animals*. Agricultural Science Review, 4th Qtr., 1970.

Parker J. B. and N. D. Bayley 1960. *Investigations on Effects of Aircraft Sound on Milk Production of Dairy Cattle*. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, Animal Husbandry Research Division (USDA-ARS 44-60, 1960).

Response to Comment 65-10

Comment Summary: The comment asks about odor impacts associated with reservoirs.

Impact 12.5.5 on page 4.12-27 finds the potential for odor impacts from reservoirs to be less than significant. The City of Santa Rosa already has an odor control program in place for its reclaimed water storage ponds that has been adequate in controlling odors, so future odor problems are not expected.

Response to Comment 65-11

Comment Summary: The comment inquires about what controls, demands, and changes will be legislated regarding implementation of the Project.

The EIR/EIS authors assume that this comment is referring to the application of reclaimed water for agriculture. The controls, demands, and changes associated with the use of reclaimed water for agricultural irrigation will be mandated by the City of Santa Rosa through the implementation of the Mitigation and Monitoring Plan, most specifically Measure 2.2.1: Irrigation Conservation and Management Programs, that will be prepared for each parcel that elects to receive reclaimed water.

The Project is also subject to permitting requirements from a number of federal, state, and local agencies. Refer to Appendix D-5 (Permitting Report). Also refer to Response to Comment 5-26 concerning implementation of mitigation.

Response to Comment 65-12

Comment Summary: The comment asks the question of who is liable for the expense to insure that wetlands will not be adversely affected.

The City of Santa Rosa will be liable for expenses that insure wetlands will not be adversely affected.

Response to Comment 65-13

Comment Summary: The comment asks who would be liable for the possible relocation or modification of holding ponds and buildings or other unforeseeable problems.

As part of the measures and standards that have been incorporated into the Project Description, Measure 2.2.27: Uniform Relocation Assistance, on page 2-60 of the Draft EIR/EIS, will apply to the Project. The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Public Law 91-646) will govern all of the acquisition and displacement actions related to the implementation of the proposed Project. Affected property owners and businesses, depending on eligibility, will be afforded various services and forms of compensation in accordance with the provisions of this act. As stated on page 4.18-24 of the Draft EIR/EIS, the reservoir component of Alternatives 2 and 3 is the only Project element that will result in loss of homes or agricultural buildings. Houses within 25 feet of the construction zone for each reservoir were counted as lost, and Table 4.18-14 on page 4.18-35 of the Draft EIR/EIS enumerates those structures.

Response to Comment 65-14

Comment Summary: The comment asks about the impact of the project on flooding. The comment states that the project will affect habitat and asks how environmentalists concerned about the esteros will be appeased. The comment also asks what the cost of appeasement will be.

The storage reservoirs are designed to hold all rainfall and runoff and not require use of the spillway; the spillway is present because of state Division of Safety of Dams requirements. However, even if a very unusual rainfall occurred, the dam will serve to decrease downstream flooding relative to the existing condition. Therefore, the impact of storage reservoirs on downstream flooding, as evaluated under Impact 4.5.5 on pages 4.4-24 and 4.4.25 of the Draft EIR/EIS, is considered less than significant.

Spillway discharge will only occur during rare and very large storm events when dilution of reclaimed water within the reservoir and dilution of the spill in the receiving waters will be high (refer to discussion on page 4.6-80 of the Draft EIR/EIS). If a spillway discharge from West County reservoirs does occur, reclaimed water impacts are considered significant and unavoidable; refer to Impact 6.5.3 starting on page 4.6-84. No feasible mitigation for these environmental impacts has been identified, and therefore no cost for such mitigation is included in the Project. In addition, there has been no attempt to determine a cost for “appeasement”, as this is outside the scope of the environmental analysis presented in the Draft EIR/EIS.

Project impacts on flooding in West County are addressed in Responses to Comments 90-27 and 59-3. The project is not expected to increase flooding.

Response to Comment 65-15

Comment Summary: The comment asks about affects of nitrogen, ammonia, salt, oxygen, sulfates, and metals on surface water, groundwater, wells, and septic tanks.

Surface water impacts are addressed in Section 4.6 of the Draft EIR/EIS. The impacts of various Project components on nitrogen are addressed under the Water Quality Narrative Criterion #2. Impacts of ammonia, salt, oxygen, sulfates, and metals are addressed under the Water Quality Numeric Criterion #1. Water quality impacts on the esteros are addressed under the Special Sites Criterion #3.

Impacts on groundwater, including wells are addressed in Section 4.5 of the Draft EIR/EIS. Nitrate from reservoirs will affect wells, but mitigation is proposed to address this impact. None of the other constituents will have significant effects on groundwater (refer to Impacts 5.5.1 and 5.5.2 discussed on pages 4.5-30 through 4.5-49). Reservoirs could also lower groundwater levels at existing or future wells, and these effects can be mitigated to a level below significance (refer to Impacts 5.5.4 and 5.5.5 on pages 4.5-49 and 4.5-50). Irrigation with reclaimed water will not have significant adverse effects on groundwater, and will not affect local wells.

Septic systems in the immediate vicinity of dams could be affected by groundwater mounding, but mitigation can reduce this impact to less than significant (refer to Impact 5.5.3 on page 4.5-48).

Response to Comment 65-16

Comment Summary: The comment asks how a pure water supply will be provided and how it will be financed.

Impacts on drinking water supply are addressed In Section 4.7 of the Draft EIR/EIS, under the Public Health and Safety Criterion #1. Impacts of urban irrigation, agricultural irrigation, and discharge to the Russian River were found to be less than significant (refer to Impacts 7.3.1, 7.7.1, and 7.9.1 starting on pages 4.7-40, 4.7-55, and 4.7-61 respectively).

Impacts of storage reservoirs on water supply are evaluated under Impact 7.5.1 on page 4.7-47 and found to be significant due to seepage from the reservoir into the adjacent groundwater from which existing and future wells draw their water. This impact will be mitigated to a level below significance by implementation of Mitigation Measure 2.3.12: Provide Replacement Water Supply for Affect Wells on page 2-85 of the Draft EIR/EIS., A replacement water supply would be provided from Santa Rosa potable water piped from the Laguna Plant. The City of Santa Rosa would install water supply pipelines in the same alignment as the reclaimed water pipe from the Laguna Plant to the selected reservoir. If groundwater quality degradation resulted from reservoir operation then the City would be responsible for connecting drinking water users to the system. The city would pay for installing the distribution system. A policy regarding charges for potable

water has not been developed yet, but individual users may pay for the water consumed. If users pay monthly water charges it has not been determined whether they would pay at the same rate as other municipal water users in the service area, or at some lower water rate.

Response to Comment 65-17

Comment Summary: The comment expresses concern about irrigation causing high water tables and asks about monitoring. Concerns are also expressed about use of sludge.

Measure 2.2.3: Restrict Surface and Subsurface Irrigation Water Runoff, on page 2-23 of the Draft EIR/EIS includes provisions for monitoring to ensure that adequate drainage is maintained. Individual irrigators will be responsible for self-monitoring, with regular checks by the City to ensure that irrigation is not adversely affecting drainage. Self-monitoring will be the responsibility of irrigators, and the City will employ staff to work with irrigators. Costs of City staff are included in the operations and maintenance costs estimates for the irrigation alternatives.

Application of sludge is not proposed as part of the irrigation program for the Subregional Long-Term Wastewater Project. However, expansion of the headworks will lead to an increase in production of sludge at the Laguna Plant. Impacts of this increased production were evaluated in the Draft EIR/EIS (refer to page 4.12-18).

Response to Comment 65-18

Comment Summary: In reference to Geology, Soils and Seismicity impacts listed in Table 1-13 on page 1-44 of the Draft EIR/EIS, the comment states that the dams are on known earthquake faults. Also, the comment disagrees with the use of the word “may” in the impact statements. Further, the comment asks what kind of pipe materials are used.

Regarding the location of dams relative to earthquake faults, refer to Response to Comment 65-2. Regarding the use of the word “may” in the impact statements, refer to Response to Comment 65-1.

Pipelines larger than 18 inches in diameter would be either welded steel construction, cement mortar lined and coated with welded joints; or ductile iron, polyethylene cased. Pipelines smaller than 18 inches would be PVC material.

Response to Comment 65-19

Comment Summary: The comment asks what is the life expectancy of the pipeline materials and whether there are guarantees or warranties.

The life expectancy of the pipeline materials proposed to be used for the project is in excess of 50 years. The warranties would be the industry standard for quality of materials and workmanship.

Response to Comment 65-20

Comment Summary: The comment asks who would be liable and responsible for installing the pipelines and replacing them as needed. The comment also asks what are the costs and responsibility for the landowner.

All transmission and irrigation distribution pipelines described in Section 3.3 of the Draft EIR/EIS as part of the Project (page 3.3-7) would be installed and maintained (including replacement as needed) by the Subregional System. Installation and maintenance of pipelines for agricultural irrigation systems on individual properties would be the responsibility of the landowner. Because such systems would be designed for each specific property and would be the responsibility of the individual landowner, no costs have been determined.

Response to Comment 65-21

Comment Summary: The comment asks if it is reasonable to locate pipelines and other facilities in areas of unstable slope conditions and active fault lines.

The Draft EIR/EIS has evaluated impacts associated with unstable slopes, and has included the following Mitigation Measures: 2.3.4, Slope Stabilization Design; 2.3.7, Slope Monitoring and Response System; 2.3.8, Earthquake Preparedness and Emergency Response Plan; and 2.4.2, Remove Weak Surficial Deposits from Reservoir Footprint. Even with these mitigation measures, it has been determined that the geysers pipeline and some South County reservoir sites have significant, unavoidable impacts associated with unstable slopes. The Draft EIR/EIS has also determined which facilities are located on active faults. The majority of pipelines, including all of the pipelines in West County and South County, do not cross an active fault line, but the Fountaingrove and Bennett Valley urban irrigation pipelines and the Geysers pipeline do cross an active fault. No other project facilities are located on an active fault. Decision makers will have to weigh these significant unavoidable impacts during Project selection, and if they find the benefits of the Project outweigh the environmental impacts, they will need to make a finding of overriding considerations in order to select such a Project.

Response to Comment 65-22

Comment Summary: The comment asks who will be liable and responsible for failure due to earthquakes, and what will the cost be. Also, the comment states that the mitigation measures are inadequate given the problems which may occur if “mother nature has her way”.

Liability would be determined by law, dependent on the facts of the specific occurrence. The costs would also depend upon the specific occurrence and cannot be determined at this time.

The impact evaluations in the Draft EIR/EIS, including the development of the Mitigation and Monitoring Program, have required extensive research and analysis into the range of behavior of the natural systems in the Project area.

Response to Comment 65-23

Comment Summary: The comment asks if insurance companies will provide needed liability insurance to property owners.

Insurance companies can provide the liability insurance to property owners. Refer to Response to Comment 65-8.

Response to Comment 65-24

Comment Summary: The comment expresses concern about dam safety.

The figures on dams presented in the comment are not quite accurate. Dams in West County vary from 140 to 225 feet high (average 192 feet) and from about 1,350 to 3,000 feet long (average 2,450 feet). Extensive measures are required by the state Division of Safety of Dams to ensure that the dams are built and maintained safely. Refer to the discussion of Division of Safety of Dams starting on page 4.3-51, and the discussion of Probability of Dam Failure, starting on page 4.19-1, of the Draft EIR/EIS. When properly built and maintained the risk of dam failure is exceedingly small. It will be up to decision makers to weigh the overall impacts of each potential alternative and select a Project.

Response to Comment 65-25

Comment Summary: The comment recites the conclusions of Section 4.19-5 regarding effects of a possible dam failure. The comment also cites examples of dams that leak.

The comment correctly reports the estimated water depths of a catastrophic dam failure, with one error: the estimated water depth at Bloomfield is 26 feet in the event of a catastrophic failure of the Carroll Road dam. The Draft EIR/EIS acknowledges that some seepage from dams will occur, and evaluates the impacts of that seepage.

Response to Comment 65-26

Comment Summary: The comment addresses dam seepage, earthquakes, and responsibility for maintenance of dams.

Dams and reservoirs would be designed and constructed to minimize leakage. Methods for reducing leakage are described in Appendix F-1 (Geotechnical Assessment of Alternative Reservoir Sites and Pipeline Routes) of the Draft EIR/EIS and include grout treatment of permeable zones and grout curtain wall construction. These design measures would not entirely eliminate seepage through the dam, and impacts of seepage are evaluated in the Draft EIR/EIS. As indicated on page 4.19-3 of the Draft EIR/EIS, the Division of Safety of Dams requires appropriate inspection, instrumentation and

monitoring which includes annual inspection and reports. Dam and reservoir inspection would also occur after a moderate or large earthquake. The City will be responsible for adhering to all Division of Safety of Dam regulations and permit conditions.

Response to Comment 65-27

Comment Summary: With respect to seepage through the reservoir dams, the comment asks what are the costs.

Reservoir seepage will be controlled under Mitigation Measure 2.5.3: Control Program for Ammonia, Hydrogen Sulfide, and Dissolved Oxygen which is described on page 2-125 of the Draft EIR/EIS. This mitigation measure would involve installation of wells between the reservoir and downstream receiving waters to intercept shallow groundwater seepage, which would be returned to the reservoir. The specific costs of this mitigation measure have not yet been determined, but have been included in the Project cost estimates through a contingency for such items.

Response to Comment 65-28

Comment Summary: The comment asks how much dam seepage is acceptable, and states that seepage means more groundwater which could decrease usable pasture. The comment further asks who is responsible for such effects and what is the cost. The comment also refers to an attached letter.

Although seepage from the dam itself is minor, the reservoir as a whole will cause localized changes in groundwater levels in the immediate vicinity of the dam. As indicated in Impact 5.5.3 on page 4.5-48 of the Draft EIR/EIS, groundwater mounding could result in significant impacts at the Carroll Road, Bloomfield, Valley Ford, and Huntley reservoir sites. These impacts are related to potential interference in the operation of leachfields. As discussed on page 5-14 of, Appendix H-1 (Hydrogeology of Storage/Reuse Areas and Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Groundwater) of the Draft EIR/EIS, the calculated groundwater mounding affects should not result in groundwater intersecting the ground surface and should not result in the need for additional drainage facilities. In reference to the letter presented at the Draft EIR/EIS Public Hearing, refer to Response to Comments 65-69 through 65-73.

Response to Comment 65-29

Comment Summary: The comment states that land will be lost at the reservoir sites not only because of the reservoir water area, but also land around the dam. The comment also states that more ground water from seepage will render flat lands at the base of the dam useless except as marsh.

Section 3.3 of the Draft EIR/EIS (page 3.3-19) acknowledges that land within a designated construction zone around the reservoir itself will need to be acquired, and this construction zone for each of the reservoirs is shown on Figures 3.3-1 through 3.3-10.

Although localized groundwater mounding could affect septic systems, it is not expected to intersect the surface to create marshy conditions. Refer to Response to Comment 65-28. In addition, groundwater seepage will be collected in wells and returned to the reservoir as described in Mitigation Measure 2.5.3 in the Draft EIR/EIS (page 2-125).

Response to Comment 65-30

Comment Summary: The comment asserts that agricultural land would be lost because of build-up of chemicals, and this additional loss of agricultural land should be added to the acreage of agricultural land lost by construction of reservoirs.

The potential for lost agricultural productivity due to build-up of trace elements or salts is evaluated in impact 2.7.4 starting on page 4.2-23 of the Draft EIR/EIS. Analysis determined that this impact is less than significant. Refer to Tables 4.2-11 and 4.2-12 on pages 4.2-24 and 4.2-25. No loss of agricultural land is projected due to build-up of chemicals.

Response to Comment 65-31

Comment Summary: The comment states that the summary table on page 1-44 does not acknowledge loss of farm land at the Valley Ford reservoir site.

The summary table only provides an indication of whether an impact was found to be significant. Refer to page 4.2-12 of the Draft EIR/EIS for a more complete discussion. The significance criterion for loss of farmland was loss of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Local Importance. None of these categories of farmland was identified at the Valley Ford site by the California Department of Conservation, Office of Land Conservation, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. As shown in Table 4.2-6 on page 4.2-12, the Valley Ford reservoir site contains 230 acres of grazing land.

Response to Comment 65-32

Comment Summary: The comment asks who is liable for back taxes associated with Williamson Act contract cancellation.

Refer to Response to Comment 65-5.

Response to Comment 65-33

Comment Summary: The comment asks about loss of land value because of the Project, and asks who would pay and how much. The comment also states that less costly solutions are available with less impact.

Regarding land acquired for construction of the Project, refer to Response to Comment 65-3. Regarding the potential for loss of land value due to agricultural irrigation or storage reservoirs, refer to Responses to Comments 65-29 and 65-30. Also, the Project

includes only voluntary irrigation contracts; no property owner will be forced to irrigate with reclaimed water. Section 4.18 identifies significant increases in agricultural productivity with irrigation (refer to pages 4.18-38 through 4.18-44), which would be likely to increase the land value.

Response to Comment 65-34

Comment Summary: The comment contends that mitigation measures for West County irrigation do not account for acts of “mother nature”, and that building dams on active faults is illogical.

Regarding mitigation measures for West County irrigation, the Draft EIR/EIS agrees that there are significant unavoidable impacts of irrigation in the West County (refer to Impact 9.7.6 starting on page 4.9-78 and impact 6.7.3 on page 4.6-89). Regarding building dams on active faults, refer to Response to Comment 65-2.

Response to Comment 65-35

Comment Summary: The comment states that the commentor will not be bound by the disclosure of potential consequences or impacts listed in the Draft EIR/EIS and reserves all rights and refuses to release, any claim that might arise from the Project.

The EIR/EIS authors do not believe that preparation of the Draft EIR/EIS constitutes a binding agreement.

Response to Comment 65-36

Comment Summary: The comment asks what contracted water means and what the cost to the user of contracted water will be.

Contracted water refers to the provision of reclaimed water by the Subregional System to individual land owners; the contract will cover a number of items, including those discussed in Measures 2.2.1 through 2.2.7 on pages 2-21 through 2-36 of the Draft EIR/EIS. The cost of reclaimed water has not yet been determined; the Draft EIR/EIS therefore did not include any costs or revenues expected from the sale of reclaimed water. The actual cost will be negotiated as part of the contract between the individual user and the Subregional System.

Response to Comment 65-37

Comment Summary: The comment indicates that the loss of land for the dam and below the dam constitutes a usage change.

As stated in Section 4.1 of the Draft EIR/EIS (page 4.1-29), the EIR/EIS authors believe that the proposed dam and reservoir are an integral part of agricultural practice, providing a source of irrigation for pasture and crops. Therefore the use of land for the proposed

reservoir should be considered consistent with agricultural usage. Refer also to Response to Comment 65-29, concerning loss of land below the dam.

Response to Comment 65-38

Comment Summary: The comment asks “how do you avoid and control discharge during flood times?”

Discharge to the Laguna or Russian River during flood conditions will not occur under Mitigation Measure 2.5.10: Discharge Prohibition During Flood Stage on page 2-137. Discharge from the storage reservoir will be avoided to the maximum extent possible through design of additional storage capacity (freeboard) and diversion structures (refer to page 3.3-22 of the Draft EIR/EIS). Discharge from storage reservoirs is not expected under normal operating conditions. Regarding potential flooding below storage reservoirs, refer to Response to Comment 65-14.

Response to Comment 65-39

Comment Summary: The comment asks if the City of Santa Rosa or the individual ranches will be responsible for purchasing needed fencing and cross-fencing and what would be the cost.

Fencing for the project will be required during construction, and permanent cattle fencing will be installed around the entire reservoir site. The costs for this fencing is included in the overall costs for Alternatives 2 and 3. Fencing may also be recommended as part of the Irrigation and Conservation Management Program prepared for each irrigation site. Because specific irrigation sites have not yet been determined, costs cannot be provided. Contracts with each user will determine responsibility for on-site improvements are shared.

Response to Comment 65-40

Comment Summary: The comment indicates that irrigated lands would be more productive, but asks whether the costs will be more or less than the costs of hay and silage.

The cost savings for use of locally grown forage on irrigated land versus imported feeds are discussed on pages 4.18-40 and 4.18-41 of the Draft EIR/EIS. The maximum annual savings for a typical dairy herd of 350 cows is estimated at \$19,600.

Response to Comment 65-41

Comment Summary: The comment asks what state and county permits would be required to use contracted water, and what would be the cost.

Based upon the City's experience with the existing system, no additional state or county permits would be required for a landowner to use reclaimed water, or to install facilities for irrigation.

Response to Comment 65-42

Comment Summary: The comment asks who is responsible for providing potable water if wells are affected.

Refer to Response to Comment 65-16.

Response to Comment 65-43

Comment Summary: The comment asks who is responsible for septic changes that might be required and at what cost.

Measure 2.5.9: Implement Septic System Monitoring and Replacement Program, on page 2-136 of the Draft EIR/EIS, commits the City to replacing any septic systems affected by increases in water levels as a result of reservoir construction. New systems will be paid for by the City. Individual property owners will be responsible for maintenance, but this is expected to be the same as for existing systems. Impact 5.7.3 on pages 4.5-53 and 4.5-54 finds that the impact of irrigation on septic systems is less than significant. Therefore, no costs are expected due to irrigation.

Response to Comment 65-44

Comment Summary: The comment asks whether there will be enough water pressure for irrigating the contracted acreage, and if not who purchases and maintains the pumps and equipment to maintain pressure, at what cost and to whom.

The pipeline system is designed to maintain adequate pressure at the point at which the water is delivered to the individual users. Any additional pumps or equipment required to maintain pressure within the individual agricultural irrigation system will be the responsibility of the user. Because such systems will have to be designed for each specific property and would be the responsibility of the individual landowner, no costs have been determined.

Response to Comment 65-45

Comment Summary: The comment asks if users are required to use the contracted amount if not needed by the user, who pays for the water and at what cost.

The cost and terms for use of reclaimed water will be negotiated as part of the contract between the individual user and the Subregional System. Users will not be required to use water in excess of the irrigation requirement for their land. Overirrigation will be prohibited by the Irrigation and Conservation Management Program. Refer to Response to Comment 65-36.

Response to Comment 65-46

Comment Summary: The comment asks when users would need to begin use of reclaimed water, citing conditions which could delay the use of water.

The terms for use of reclaimed water will be negotiated as part of the contract between the individual user and the Subregional System. The type of crop to be planted, and a “phased approach” using first silage and then pasture, is up to the landowner so long as it is consistent with the Irrigation and Conservation Management Program for each site.

Response to Comment 65-47

Comment Summary: The comment asks who provides the seed and at what cost.

The cost of seed will be the responsibility of the individual user, and because this will be at the cost of the individual user, no cost estimate is provided. However, the City may choose to provide some assistance with start-up costs, which will be negotiated as part of the contract with each user.

Response to Comment 65-48

Comment Summary: The comment asks who provides the irrigation pipe and sprinklers and at what cost.

Refer to Response to Comment 65-20.

Response to Comment 65-49

Comment Summary: The comment asks who provides maintenance and extra equipment and at what cost.

Maintenance of individual agricultural irrigation systems will be the responsibility of the reclaimed water user, as will any equipment needed for operation of the individual irrigation system. Refer to Responses to Comments 65-20 and 65-44.

Response to Comment 65-50

Comment Summary: The comment asks who will monitor chemical and metal build-up and at what cost, and whether growing clover which adds more nitrogen to soil has been considered.

Regarding chemical and metal build-up in the soil, refer to Response to Comment 65-30. Measure 2.2.6: Agrochemical and Fertilizer Best Management Practices, on page 2-34 of the Draft EIR/EIS, specifies both soil and plant tissue testing to ensure appropriate application of fertilizers and pesticides. Appendix D-19 (Irrigation Management Guidelines for the West County and South County Alternatives) of the Draft EIR/EIS provides additional detail regarding monitoring, including, on page 52, a hypothetical

monitoring program for soil, surface water and groundwater. The specifics will vary depending on the site. The City will be responsible for monitoring. Legume crops such as clover do fix nitrogen in soil, and this would enable a reduction in fertilizer application. This will be managed through the monitoring program described in Section 2 of the Draft EIR/EIS.

Response to Comment 65-51

Comment Summary: The comment asks about sludge build up when pipes are flushed.

As described in Section 3.3 (page 3.3-5) of the Draft EIR/EIS, flushing of the pipes is to prevent accumulation of solids. The solids which accumulate in the pipes would be typical of those found in any water pipelines, such as algal growth, and would not be characterized as sludge.

Response to Comment 65-52

Comment Summary: The comment asks what will happen if research discovers adverse effects from use of reclaimed water and who is liable.

Extensive research has already been conducted on use of reclaimed water, and no adverse effects are expected. The monitoring program is designed to detect any problems early to allow correction of problems or cessation of reclaimed water delivery. Operations of the Project will be required to comply with all applicable requirements of State and Federal law.

Response to Comment 65-53

Comment Summary: The comment indicates that sludge is mentioned in the Draft EIR/EIS and asks whether users of reclaimed water are required to take sludge.

The reference to sludge in Section 3.2-3 of the Draft EIR/EIS is in relation to the Biosolids Beneficial Reuse Project. This project is separate from the Long-Term Wastewater Project, and contracts for sludge reuse will not necessarily be tied to contracts for use of reclaimed water.

Response to Comment 65-54

Comment Summary: The comment asks “who is responsible for excess wastewater running into the esteros?”

Measures 2.2.1 through 2.2.6 on pages 2-21 through 2-35 describe specific performance standards and practices that will be employed to minimize the Project impact on the esteros. The Draft EIR/EIS does not establish the legal responsibility for mismanagement of reclaimed water, but has evaluated the impacts of one particular scenario (described on page 3.3-40) that is considered to be representative of irrigation system malfunction.

Response to Comment 65-55

Comment Summary: The comment asks about hook-up fees for contracted water.

There has been no determination concerning hook up fees for use of reclaimed water. The terms for use of reclaimed water will be negotiated as part of the contract between the individual user and the Subregional System. Refer to Response to Comment 65-36.

Response to Comment 65-56

Comment Summary: The comment asks whether irrigated pasture is cost effective, and expresses concerns about saturation of lands.

Experience with the City's existing irrigation system has shown that irrigated pasture is cost effective. Irrigated pasture management is discussed on page 39 of Appendix D-19 (Irrigation Management Guidelines for the West County and South County Alternatives) of the Draft EIR/EIS. Measure 2.2.3: Restrict Surface and Subsurface Irrigation Water Runoff, on page 2-23 of the Draft EIR/EIS, is designed to ensure that fields are not over-irrigated.

Response to Comment 65-57

Comment Summary: The comment asks about the survey of potential irrigation users, about "padding" of estimates of reclaimed water use, and asks how much reclaimed water would be applied per acre.

Regarding the survey of potential irrigation users, refer to Response to Comment 64-6. Methods for estimating crop water requirements for West County are presented on page 17 of Appendix E-2 (Irrigation Suitability Land Classification and Existing and Potential Agricultural Land Uses, West County Reclamation Study Area) of the Draft EIR/EIS. Estimates were based on climate and crop data. Table 6 on page 18 in Appendix E-2 shows that pasture would use from 19.1 to 19.4 inches of water per year. Crop consumptive use in West County is estimated to average 20 inches per year. With irrigation inefficiencies, an average application rate of 24 inches (2 feet) per year is predicted. The application rate for West County is considerably less than for South County.

Response to Comment 65-58

Comment Summary: The comment asks what happens to contracted water which is not used because of lack of need during the rainy months, and, if there are insufficient willing irrigators, whether contracted users will be made to take more water.

The estimates of irrigation acreage required to dispose of reclaimed water took into consideration the growing season and the rainy season. Water which is not actually delivered to the users will remain in the storage reservoir. In addition to normal irrigation contracts, the City may contract with additional lands for winter irrigation, to be used

during contingency events during dry winters. Concerning feasibility of a West County alternative, refer to Master Response 6, located in Section 6.2 of this document. Also, refer to Response to Comment 65-45.

Response to Comment 65-59

Comment Summary: The comment asks what will be the cost of the reclaimed water to the user. The comment also asks if there will be irrigation managers and how they will be funded.

Regarding the cost of water, refer to Response to Comment 65-36. Regarding irrigation managers, pages 21 through 23 of Appendix D-19 (Irrigation Management Guidelines for the West County and South County Alternatives), of the Draft EIR/EIS discusses assistance in management and implementation and cost sharing. The City may provide assistance to irrigators, but the precise level of assistance has not been determined. As stated in Appendix D-19, "Determining levels of assistance in financing and management may be addressed on a case-by-case basis with individual irrigation users. All terms and conditions may be specified in each individual agreement between the City and the irrigator for water delivery."

Response to Comment 65-60

Comment Summary: The comment asks what will happen when trying to insure property and what will the increase be?

The individual land owner will be responsible for their own liability insurance; the cost of insurance is expected to be the same as for an irrigation system using potable water. Refer to Response to Comment 65-8 regarding insurance for properties near dams.

Response to Comment 65-61

Comment Summary: The comment indicates that ranchers and their families have been subject to stress and anxiety because of the project, and asks what is the cost of this.

The Draft EIR/EIS has addressed environmental impacts of Project alternatives, but it is beyond the scope of an environmental document to evaluate stress.

Response to Comment 65-62

Comment Summary: In reference to acquisition of property for project facilities, the comment asks if an owner will be able to use the remaining land as it has been used.

As indicated in Section 3.3 (page 3.3-19) of the Draft EIR/EIS, the City will attempt to acquire only that portion of a property necessary for construction coincident with the designated construction zone. This acquisition will not change the owner's rights of use of the remaining property. It is possible that in some instances remaining parcels will be too small to be useful. The Draft EIR/EIS, on page 3.3-19 has acknowledged that in

some cases, the City may be required to purchase the entire parcel. Refer to Response to Comment 65-2 and 65-4.

Response to Comment 65-63

Comment Summary: The comment asks what the phrase “the life of the action” means, how long it is and what happens after.

This phrase is from the CEQA and NEPA definition of mitigation, quoted on page 1-30 of the Draft EIR/EIS. For the purpose of this Draft EIR/EIS, the life of the action is the life of the project. The project is designed to provide for disposal of reclaimed water through buildout of the General Plans of the member entities of the Subregional System, approximately through the year 2020, and the project will be constructed during that time period. The Project will continue to operate beyond this time period, continuing to provide for disposal of reclaimed water indefinitely.

Response to Comment 65-64

Comment Summary: The comment asks if the Santa Rosa representatives elected in November 1996 will be aware of the wastewater issues and impacts in order to intelligently come to a decision. The comment then asks if the decision will be in limbo as it has for the past 11 years.

The City Council and Board of Public Utilities (BPU) have directed and participated in the preparation and review of the Draft EIR/EIS. The following meetings have been conducted:

- Screening of Alternatives (March 1994);
- Selection of alternatives (May 1994);
- Selection of significance criteria associated with the Subregional Long-Term Wastewater Project since its inception;
- Scoping (October 1994); and
- Roundtable processes (October/December 1995). Board of Public Utilities members participated in several publicly held meeting to review and discuss preliminary EIR/EIS sections.

The Interim Technical reports and the preliminary draft EIR/EIS sections were distributed to the BPU and City Council throughout the preparation of the environmental documentation.

On August 8, 1996 the City Council and Board of Public Utilities were provided copies of the Draft EIR/EIS Volumes I, II and III. The technical appendices (Volumes IV through XVII) were provided to the BPU and have been readily available to the Council upon request. On August 8, 1996, the City Council and BPU were given a presentation on the document. The presentation included a discussion of the schedule, how to review the document, and the conclusions presented in the document. An 800 toll free number

was available to City Council and BPU members if they needed any assistance in their review. Both the City Council and Board of Public Utilities will have had more than six months to review the Draft EIR/EIS. The BPU received a copy of all comments that were submitted during circulation (Volumes XVII and XIX) on December 5, 1996, more than 4 months prior to the decision on certification. When responses to comments submitted have been prepared they will be incorporated into the Final EIR. The City Council and BPU will be provided copies of the Final EIR prior to the decision on Certification, and at the time of certification they will be required to exercise their independent judgment and make their own independent determination whether the EIR is adequate and satisfies the requirements of law. New City Council members have been educated on the project once they were sworn into office. Copies of the Draft EIR/EIS were provided to the new members. City staff and the Consultant were available to answer any questions.

The following items identify the environmental process after completion of the Final EIR:

- The Board of Public Utilities will review the Final EIR and will consider certification in June of 1997;
- If the Final EIR is certified the Selection process will occur during the Summer of 1997;
- When selection of the project is complete the Final EIS and 404 permit, will be prepared and submitted in the Fall of 1997;
- At completion of review of the Final EIS and 404 permit the Corps of Engineers will submit a Record of Decision in Winter of 1997/1998;
- Final Selection of the project will occur in March 1998; and
- Construction would begin shortly after and completion will vary depending on the alternative that is chosen.

Response to Comment 65-65

Comment Summary: The comment states that it is inconceivable that the City of Santa Rosa would consider condemnation of prime agricultural lands for use as storage sites for reclaimed water (especially because of the threat of dam failure caused by earthquakes) rather than discharging the reclaimed water to the ocean, reusing the reclaimed water within the City, or using small on-farm reservoirs and irrigation.

As noted on page 4.2-12 of the Draft EIR/EIS, none of the storage sites would impact Prime Farmland (as defined by the California Department of Land Conservation), although the Tolay Extended, Adobe Road, Tolay Confined and Two Rock Reservoirs will cause the loss of substantial grazing land, unique farmland, and farmland of local importance. Further, it is too early in the process to conclude that condemnation would be necessary; willing sellers may be available for reservoir sites. Regarding double piping systems and urban irrigation, refer to Response to Comment 65-6. Regarding ocean discharge, refer to page 3.1-33 for the reasons this alternative was eliminated from consideration. Regarding small on-farm reservoirs, refer to Master Response 14, located in Section 6.2 of this document.

Response to Comment 65-66

Comment Summary: The comment asks about zoning and other regulatory statutes which control building.

Section 2.1 of the Draft EIR/EIS lists the applicable regulations with which the Project must comply, including zoning ordinances and building and grading regulations. Section 4.1 of the Draft EIR/EIS also specifically addresses conformance of the Project with zoning regulations. Zoning in the Project area would not be changed.

Response to Comment 65-67

Comment Summary: The comment asks if more dams will be required as more growth occurs. The comment states that more growth and more dams would have more negative impacts on shrinking agriculture and ecological habitat.

This project is designed for the buildout of jurisdictions within the Subregional System. Should the jurisdictions modify their general plans to expand, the effects of those amendments must be addressed at that time through appropriate environmental documentation.

Response to Comment 65-68

Comment Summary: The comment states that the language and organization of the Draft EIR/EIS was difficult to understand and that the cost of purchasing the volumes or CD-ROM was expensive. It was felt that the availability of the documents for review was restricted and did not fulfill the requirements of law.

Refer to Master Response 1, concerning organization of the document, and Master Response 3, concerning cost and availability of the document. Both Master Responses are located in Section 6.2 of this document.

Response to Comment 65-69

Comment Summary: The comment asks why dams are proposed on active earthquake faults.

Refer to Response to Comment 65-2. The five dams evaluated in the Draft EIR/EIS are alternative sites; only one would be built if a West County Project is selected.

Response to Comment 65-70

Comment Summary: This comment asks whether fish will like to swim below the wastewater dam and where water from seepage goes.

The impacts of dam leakage on water quality of streams below the dam were evaluated in Impacts 6.5.1 through 6.5.3 (starting on page 4.6-79 of the Draft EIR/EIS), and found to

be significant and unavoidable in the West County. Water seeping from dam enters the creek below the dam and, in theory, some seepage may ultimately enter the ocean, albeit much diluted. Although there are potential water quality concerns regarding seepage from reservoirs, Mitigation Measure 2.5.3: Control Program for Hydrogen Sulfide, Ammonia, and Dissolved Oxygen, on page 2-125, would reduce these impacts to less than significant, and reservoirs would thus not adversely affect aquatic organisms.

Response to Comment 65-71

Comment Summary: The comment suggests that heavy rains should be considered when designing an erosion control plan.

The EIR/EIS authors concur that heavy rains should be considered in erosion control facilities. Project erosion impacts are discussed starting on page 4.2-22 of the Draft EIR/EIS.

Response to Comment 65-72

Comment Summary: The comment recites the conclusions of Section 4.19 regarding effects of a possible dam failure, and questions the effectiveness of calling 911.

The comment correctly reports the estimated water depths of a catastrophic dam failure. The Draft EIR/EIS does not recommend calling 911 as a mitigation for dam failure. The most important measures are construction and maintenance according to requirements of the Division of Safety of Dams, which will reduce the risk of dam failure to a less than significant level. The Draft EIR/EIS also calls for preparation of evacuation plans as required by the Office of Emergency Services (refer to Measure 2.2.14, Dam Safety, on page 2-45).

Response to Comment 65-73

Comment Summary: The comment indicates disbelief that the proposed mitigation measures for the West County Alternative are adequate solutions to prevent the problems that would occur if Mother Nature decided to have her way.

The comment provides a statement of opinion without any specific evidence. It does not comment on the adequacy of any specific mitigation measures included in the Draft EIR/EIS. The EIR/EIS authors believe that the mitigation program described in Chapter 2 will be effective, and have identified impacts that could not be reduced or eliminated through mitigation.

Response to Comment 65-74

Comment Summary: The comment consists of several pages of printed regulations (Sections 51286, 51290 through 51296, and a portion of section 51296.5) attached to Comment Letter 65 which are described by a handwritten note as "Williamson Act - Government Code Sections."

The attachment is provided in support of Comment 65-6. Refer to Response to Comment 65-6.

Response to Comment 65-75

Comment Summary: The comment consists of a newspaper article attached to Comment Letter 65 entitled "Cheap, clean wastewater solution: Put it in the river" dated September 29, 1996 from what has been identified in handwriting in Comment Letter 65 as The Press Democrat.

The Draft EIR/EIS has evaluated Russian River discharge as an alternative, and has determined it to be the "environmentally superior alternative", as defined on page 5-22 of the Draft EIR/EIS.

Response to Comment 65-76

Comment Summary: The comment consists of a copy of Figure 4.14-17 from the Draft EIR/EIS which is attached to Comment Letter 65.

No specific comment is made regarding the figure, which shows a visual simulation of the Valley Ford Reservoir Site, so no specific response is possible.

