

PUBLIC COMMENTOR 206 - DICK SHANNON, SEPTEMBER 24, 1996

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Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Dick Shannon. I represent the agricultural property rights alliance. My address, by the way, is 2030 Fallon Road. That's in Petaluma. Address is in the county. The APRA is a group of ranchers, farmers, property owners and environmentalists formed to demonstrate that the West County alternative to the wastewater project is not viable. Several members of the APRA will be speaking to you today, and many, many of them are in the audience. You will note the red banners and the yellow banners. We will be submitting the points that I make, the points that they make in writing before the 7th. I wish to focus on two points here this afternoon. One is the Williamson Act. Another is the crops proposed in the West County

The Williamson Act, in section 3.2 of the EIR, reference is made to cancellation of Williamson Act contracts due to parcels being used as one of the alternatives. It suggests that contracts would be canceled if the parcels remaining are under 40 acres. The analysis does not account for the fact that the Williamson Act parcels will need to be condemned in the West County to implement this project. The Williamson Act itself in section 51292(b) states

That no condemnation of contracted land shall take place if there is other land on which reasonably feasible -- on which it is reasonably feasible to locate the public improvement. Therefore, it can be argued that given that there are other alternatives, the West County alternative cannot be implemented and should be eliminated. This due to law | The West County crops, the EIR refers in several sections to crops to be considered for agricultural options. It refers to a letter from Questa Engineering describing these crops. The EIR does not satisfactorily reflect the negative warnings that the Questa Engineering group included in their letter. Some highlights follow. The shallow soils and generally poor drainage conditions of the West County are not conducive for deep rooting requirements of orchards.

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Microclimate conditions are not suitable for most wine grapes. Cool summer and pockets of summer fog may restrict growth of forage crops. Even where irrigation is available, alfalfa hay has not been grown very successfully. Since infrastructures are largely missing in the West County, rapid conversion of pasture and oat-hay land is not currently expected. The EIR should reflect these facts and other facts that were brought upon you this afternoon.

Thank you very much.

Mayor Wright:

Thank you, Mr. Shannon. Joe Tresch followed, by Rue Furch, followed by Ed Grossi.