

**PUBLIC COMMENTOR 208 - RUE FURCH, SEPTEMBER 24, 1996**

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Hi. Mayor Wright, Council Persons, Board Members, and I don't know who the Army Corps of Engineer representative is, but thank you for allowing us to be here. My name is Rue Furch. I live in Sebastopol and I'm a member of stakeholders consensus on reuse. Otherwise known as SCOR. We really appreciate your allowing us to speak before you. This is a very important issue, and we thank you for your commitment to the public process. Water is such a basic to our future that everyone has a stake in these deliberations, and that's why you see the level of interest here.

I also wanted to thank you and City staff for providing time and information to the SCOR group throughout our process. SCOR includes over 20 representatives from business, agriculture, the environment, and rate payers from north, south, east and western Sonoma County who have met every other week for the last 16 months. Each of us has something to gain or lose as a result of your decision. Nine of us will attempt to summarize our areas of agreement today. Given the diversity of the group, you'll understand that we agree to disagree on a number of things, but in areas where we have found agreement, we are strengthened in our resolve and our commitment.

Our commitment has always been to find a solution that is environmentally sensitive, economically responsible, technically feasible, and politically viable. A win-win. Today, we will each raise points to be absolutely sure that they are included in this EIR. Santa Rosa has done a very good job of increasing water conservation and we commend you on that effort. Decreasing the amount of wastewater is a very simple part of a long-term solution, and we urge you to explore expanding your efforts and looking for emergency conservation plans to reduce discharge into the river just as is done during droughts.

From an economic perspective, agricultural reuse is the only alternative that creates revenues. Discharge to the Russian River represents a net cost with no benefits, and is contrary to the primary objective of reuse and reclamation. We therefore call upon the City to affirm, not abandon its long-standing commitment to reclamation. Demand exceeds the supply of water available in the years ahead. For farm land to remain in viable and productive use, farmers will need flexibility to produce more or grow crops of higher value. Wastewater is one part of building that diversity.

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The reclaimed water has economic value to both the irrigators and users of the subregional system. Maintaining the City's commitment to acquire storage or irrigation acreage only from willing sellers will ensure the support of agriculture and the demand for reclaimed water. Selecting a project must account for long-term benefits as well as costs. A project should be based on a broadly comprehensive cost benefit perspective that accounts for all regional and long-term benefits, as well as costs. Your current interim solution includes expanding storage and irrigation acre incrementally. We support your efforts and see a greater value in continuing to phase expanded irrigation and storage. A pay-as-you-grow solution. Debt service for a large expensive project drives costs up, and if growth does not occur as projected, costs will shift from developers to rate payers. Debt payment should be kept at a minimum, as they constitute

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nearly half of the cost of the long-term project. A phased reuse project could provide expandability, flexibility, and savings. Given the money to be made, partnerships can be part of the solution.

Developers, agriculturalists, and municipalities are all possible players. They each bring a different opportunity for funding and different opportunities for solutions to the table.

It's the way things must work in the future if they are to work at all. The concept of a system of buffers to remove the necessity for over engineering the perfect project and to add -- to address the issue of weather independence must also be explored in the EIR, and Dr. Wickham suggested one type. There are a number of possibilities. And we'll to get to those later. In summary, I want to note the water is a resource that should not be

thrown away. It has economic value. The project should be phased to eliminate engineering risks and high front-end costs. There should be room for public private partnerships in development rather than having this be approached as a giant and expensive public work, and that it needs to be environmentally responsible. We want to be sure that these points are covered by this EIR in order to ensure the potential for a win-win solution. Thank you very much for your consideration.

**Mayor Wright:**

Let me just -- Ed, before you start. Just reiterate, asking you that if you agree with a previous speaker, you can just say "I agree with the previous speaker." There's not a need to repeat, because all of those will be responded to, and they would be grouped together anyway. This is on adequacy of the EIR and not on specific projects. Ed Grossi, followed by Scott Stegman, followed by Anne Seeley.