

PUBLIC COMMENTOR 215 - PAULA BLAYDES, SEPTEMBER 24, 1996

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Good afternoon. My name is Paula Blaydes. I'm an environmental and land use consultant and a member of SCOR. Also I live in Santa Rosa. As an environmental professional who has written, edited, and commented on EIR/EIS's for the last 20 years, I find the emphasis on the cost of the alternatives in the document to be excessive. It appears from the reaction of the press and others that even though the focus of this document is supposed to be on the environmental issues, the most compelling reason the discharge alternative is preferred is because it costs the least. Of course, the document must address socio and economic impacts. However, the data used for costing of the alternatives taken from the consultants' November, 1995 cost study are misleading. The costs are misleading because they do not address construction costs for realistic projects known as value engineering. They're misleading because they include contingencies and adders that are compounded to raise the estimated construction cost 55 percent plus 20 years of estimated operation and maintenance costs and 20 years of six and a half percent interest rates for financing on top of the construction cost estimates that will have contingency fees included.

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This also assumes that the basic project costs are accurate, which is debatable. Any cost estimate inaccuracies are magnified by the 55 percent cost adders. An example of a misleading construction estimate is the geysers pipeline route for alternative 4. The consultants-engineers preparing the piping cost estimate stated in the November, 1995 document that he has no experience in high pressure pipe lines. He felt the costs were at least 10 percent high, which is then increased by the 55 percent cost adders. The result is unrealistic pricing. The geysers operators responded to the November report with more realistic numbers based on over 20 years of pipeline experience, but the numbers in the Draft EIR/EIS are the same as those that were in the November report, and now the consultants will receive over \$300,000 more to come up with more accurate cost figures for the geysers. In addition, the pipeline route only considers the pine flat road. That route, among other problems, would cost an additional 8 million dollars to repave the road, whereas the geysers operators have already identified more than one variation of that route which would eliminate or minimize many of the problems, including the need for the 8 million dollar repaving, and would shorten the route up to two miles. In closing, as a rate payer, I urge the consideration of more realistic projects, costing of the alternatives to be included in the Final EIR/EIS. Also, it should address options for the project phasing and for the potential of public private partnerships for the geysers and smaller agriculture irrigation projects that SCOR advocates such as the Gallo Rohnert Park project. Thank you very much.

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Mayor Wright:

Thanks. Bill Mailliard, followed by Jim Jacobs, followed by Kathy Tresch, then Elizabeth Gunther .