

PUBLIC COMMENTOR 221 - MARY ANN DIAZ-ROMERO, SEPTEMBER 24, 1996

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My name is Mary Ann Diaz-Romero, and I live at 2018 Fallon Road, which is part of the Huntley site. My husband and I own a ranch out there and we are also members of the agricultural property rights alliance. My commentary is on irrigation. It's a brief commentary because a more lengthy one will be submitted. Santa Rosa Subregional Long-Term Wastewater project, as we see it, is an urban development project and has nothing to do with enhancing agriculture in the West County. Following the primary objectives, the DEIR/DEIS mentions a secondary objective, as you know, of reuse, stating that an important purpose of the project is to benefit agriculture, greenbelts, et cetera, et cetera. And this would be done through reclamation. Now, we don't feel that the project is interested in benefiting agriculture in the West County, but only using storage reservoirs and agricultural irrigation as a means of disposing wastewater.

Now I get into the irrigation part. 2.2, land classification, specifications, irrigation, page 5 states that irrigation suitability, land classification is based on field appraisal of physical characteristics and on the interpretation of laboratory results. Now, how valid is this classification when the Draft points out on the very same page in the previous paragraph that not all the land was surveyed?

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The Draft continues on the same page by saying the characteristics considered in irrigation suitability and land classification are soils, topography, and drainage, as well as the interrelationships of these with climatic conditions. Now, Questa Engineering points out on page 2 of its summary of findings that an average annual irrigation water use of 23 inches per acre is estimated in the West County City area.

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The disposal of wastewater by means of irrigation brings up several questions regarding the irrigation suitability characteristics of soil, soil compaction, and drainage. The primary question is, however, do the soils of Sonoma County -- excuse me -- do the soils in the West County have the water capacity to absorb 23 inches per acre in addition to the normal rainfall?

According to soil survey U.S. department of agriculture, the West County soils largely consist of the Steinbeck Los Osos (phonetic) association. Now, the water capacity for this type of loam and clay in the West County ranges from four to eleven inches, and my question is, where is it substantiated that West County soil has the water capacity for 23 inches? Thank you very much.