

**PUBLIC COMMENTOR 222 - ERIC KOENIGSHOFER, SEPTEMBER 24, 1996**

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My name's Eric Koenigshofer, I live at 160 Bohemian Highway in Freestone. I'd like to begin with just a word on our sensitivity to political debate. I read last week that Brenda Adelman was taken to task by the BPU for allegedly using innuendo and half truths in her letter to Santa Rosa residents, and a recent mailer that I sent to river households and submitted copies for the City Council's review has been characterized by some City officials as political and without compromise. And at times I feel confounded by our limited appreciation of the benefits of a robust exchange of views and positions and competing perspectives. Not all issues can be resolved by compromise. Half of a bad idea is not good decision making. I'm here to express a point of view. I'm here to convey what a large number of people in our -- this complex community of ours think about this issue. Political? You bet. That's how our democracy works. At the same time I'm here to problem solve. With the completion of the Draft EIR and EIS, we all move closer to a moment when a decision is taken in this matter. It may be prudent to take pause at this critical moment and step carefully. I'll submit written comments on these specific points as well. In reviewing the Draft EIR, I've been unable to find a succinct treatment of the true environmentally preferred solution, which is zero discharge. In all the material, which is truly substantial in volume, I've not found a guiding policy statement which sets as a target the visionary goal of an unquestionably clean Russian River, zero discharge of wastewater, the policy posture which makes most sense to the long-term environmental and economic interests of our whole community.

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Zero discharge means the wastewater is used, not disposed of. Zero discharge means the wastewater is no longer wastewater but becomes agricultural irrigation water. Value assigned versus disposal assumed. Now, Sonoma County has established an irrigation -- an ag irrigation zone for the purpose of reaching out to make this approach work. So I'd like to see the City and the county engage this partnership to facilitate the achievement of ag irrigation as opposed to river discharge. In order for our community to understand and consider the relative costs and benefits of such an approach, it's necessary that more information be more clearly presented in the Draft document. Zero discharge would require a certain amount of storage and agricultural use over a period of time. How much storage is needed, by what dates, how much agricultural water would be required to consume the stored capacity. what specific costs are associated at each stage of the development of that project as it tracks growth in the community so that there's a sufficient financial resource to implement that solution is not -- it's either absent from the document or it's -- it's not pulled out in a way that's easily understood. Would this amount to a monthly fee increase to the average system user of \$3, \$5, \$10? We don't know. And the community can't engage this option in the kind of terms that are necessary to bring it to a decision and embrace it if the information's not there.

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Last March, in the West County, two school bonds of significant size were approved. The approach that was taken was specific projects on specific campuses for specifically stated amounts of money were submitted to the voters for their approval. That kind of understanding will reveal to the council and everybody in this community the willingness

of people in Sonoma County to invest in a clean river. And it's necessary that -- that there be some commitment to at least explore the zero discharge option so that the document can bring forth material that reflects that commitment. As I said, understanding the timing of the financial implications on monthly rates is critical. Understanding that we can move away from river discharge altogether.

Now, in the end, we're all river residents. Properly understood, the Russian River community is that which exists within the watershed, and the pride that Santa rosans exhibited in the restoration of Santa Rosa creek is appropriately understood as pride in the Russian River. There are numerous tributaries that run through the City. Santa Rosa exists on the edge of a laguna. All of us share this same ecological unit, the watershed. And I'm sure that if presented with specifics and asked are you willing to invest this amount of money in an absolutely clean river, people in Santa Rosa and the other user jurisdictions as well as people in the West County will make the investment necessary to do that. And I would just cite the article that was in gail baron's (phonetic) column in august about the 1969 natural water ways report. It had been presented an opportunity for Santa Rosa to preserve the Santa Rosa creek. So that was passed. Let's not make that same mistake. 30 years from now when people look back at those of us making decisions at the turn of the century, let's have them applaud our insight and our commitment to having the river in a unit in its watershed being a healthy series of habitat, fishery, and forests, and pure water. Thank you.

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**Mayor Wright:**

Thank you, Mr. Koenigshofer. Mary Blanchard Coletti followed by Len Swenson followed by Leon Beck followed by Martin Coopender.