

PUBLIC COMMENTOR 232 - JUDY JAMES, SEPTEMBER 24, 1996

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Hello. Good afternoon, Mayor Wright, members of the City Council and the Board of Public Utilities, I'm Judy James with the Sonoma County farm bureau, and we represent over 2,000 member families in Sonoma county. And because we are supporting a lot of the issues you've already heard, I'm down to just a couple of paragraphs. The farm bureau supports the development of reclaimed water for a supplemental supply, especially in areas where fresh supplies may be short or in locations within or adjacent to metropolitan areas where large reclaimed water supplies are available.

However, we oppose the use of condemnation to achieve these purposes. | Instead of developing a few very large reservoirs as specifically indicated in the EIR, we believe it would be better to phase in smaller voluntary projects. This will provide the most long-term benefit for agriculture because the use of water will be based on supply and demand and farmers and other land owners will not be forced to give up their lands and possibly their livelihood.

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A good example is the market for water created by the Gallo project. Several surrounding land owners have expressed an interest in tapping onto their line. | We feel that an economically driven market will ensure the long-term viability of the reclaimed water system. Land owners will be happy to pay for the water if it is market driven and they can utilize the water to create a higher economic return. | Additionally, the EIR indicates potential sites under the Williamson Act, any potentially significant effects to agricultural lands must be avoided or adequately mitigated. It is the express policy of the state of California that local public improvements such as treatment and storage ponds be located on non-prime agricultural lands that is not enrolled in the Williamson Act, California's agricultural land preservation law.

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| This is a very emotional issue for some of our members whose land and livelihoods are threatened with condemnation. We hope to find a solution to reduce project costs by expanding the distribution systems that are also in place and to satisfy the storage problem through more voluntary on- farm storage. Thank you for your consideration.

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Mayor Wright :

Thank you, Judy. Jean Marie Foster, followed by Becky Lepori, followed by Tristan Warner.