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**PUBLIC COMMENTOR 252 - ERIC AUSTENSEN, SEPTEMBER 24, 1996**

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Hi.

**Mayor Wright:**

Are you Eric or Rob?

**ERIC AUSTENSEN:**

Hi. Yeah, my name's Eric Austensen. Eric Austensen: and I'm with the Sonoma County chapter of the Surfrider Foundation.

**Mayor Wright:**

We're having a little difficulty hearing you, so make sure you speak into the microphone, Eric.

**ERIC AUSTENSEN:**

I'm with the Sonoma County chapter of the Surfrider Foundation, and we're a group of ocean lovers and surfers who have had problems getting sick over the years.

We're against pollution in the surf zone. We're against discharge into the river. I realize that this meeting is for suggestions on your Draft EIR, and I had a few things that nobody has mentioned and I want to bring it up. One thing I want to talk about that hasn't been included is I wrote a sentence or two here -- I wrote a sentence or two here that would help summarize what I want to say. The public perceives dumping into the river as a horrible offense against the environment, regardless of the claims of scientists about how clean the effluent is. The general tendency of the public will be to add more pollution to the river when it is perceived that the City of Santa Rosa is dumping polluted sewage into the river.

Let me give you an example of what I'm talking about. A little example about junior and his dad. They live in the City of Santa Rosa. Well, dad changes junior's oil in his car, and junior says "thanks a lot, dad. Well, hey, what should I do with this oil now?" And dad says "oh, go dump it in the catch basin. Out in the street." And junior says, "well, dad, that's polluting," and dad says "aw, the City of Santa Rosa dumps all their sewage into the river. Do it anyway." Junior says "aw, dad, you're so smart."

I think the EIR needs to look at this matter. I also want to suggest mitigation. I want to make it clear that we're against dumping in the river, but if you do dump into the river, we realize you're looking at saving over 200 million dollars, and one and a half million dollars a year in maintenance costs, and you have a lot of incentive to do it. So I want to mention a few things.

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You're going to be saving a lot of money by doing this, and I'd like to suggest that you use some of that money that you save for a massive river cleanup program that would help clean up the river, and use that money for public education in schools and public organizations like friends of the river or Surfrider Foundation.

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You could give the money to schools of all levels, elementary school through high school and colleges, junior college. Teach that the effluent really is clean. You can prove to everybody that the effluent is clean, maybe show your testing examples.

You could talk about nonpoint source pollution, which is urban runoff, which is a very serious problem we have in the river. You could use the money to fund cleanup programs in the City of Santa Rosa and along the river like maybe hook some of your leaking septic tanks in the City of Santa Rosa into the City sewer lines so they don't get into the creeks that run into the river.

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Maybe you could monitor your construction activities a little better.

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And maybe get a little -- work a little better on your storm drain stenciling programs. I don't see very many of your catch basins marked off. Maybe you could donate money to the regional water quality control board who is helping you guys keep the river clean.

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Also, I'd like to suggest -- this is a little bit of a different idea -- that you leave the option open for people to use to tap into that line. If you want -- really want to run a line into the Russian River, leave it open, leave a way for farmers and redwood farmers and people that want to use the water, leave them a chance to get into that and use that water for farming, or irrigation, or whatever, or wet lands, or whatever else you want to do.

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Also, I'd like -- one last thing I'd like to mention, that if you are going to do this, that you do it -- a daily water testing report in the press democrat of, for example coliform, e. Coli bacteria. And -- now -- I'm just trying to slip all this in now. I'm not advocating that you dump into the river. We're against that. Thank you very much for your time to speak.

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**Mayor Wright:**

Thank you Eric. Rob Levinsky? Is Rob here? Steve klausner?