
PUBLIC COMMENTOR 253 - STEVE KLAUSNER, SEPTEMBER 24, 1996

309

Yes, my name is Steve Klausner. I'm a member of the board of directors of the Sonoma County taxpayers association, and have been following this issue for years and years and years, it seems like. In fact, when this all started, I was actually president of the Sonoma County conservation council.

At that time, one of the real alternatives being studied was actually habitat restoration of the Laguna, and I appeared before the board time and time again urging that that alternative be kept in. I understand why it was dropped. I believe the corps of engineers is one of the main reasons for dropping that alternative, because of the need to do mitigation whenever you do any kind of habitat restoration work within jurisdictional wetlands. So I hope you are looking at those kinds of policies. I think the conclusions that this EIR draws are fair and reasonable. A discharge into the Laguna is safe. It's safe for people. It's safe for wildlife. It is far preferable to damming up large reservoirs at far ends of the county.

310

The inundation of native species, plant life, wood lands -- the things that go along with those projects environmentalists have always opposed. They have always stood up and opposed dams, and now suddenly we have every environmentalist in favor of building dams.

Nowhere else in the country is this kind of thing happening. I think one of the other things we're seeing right now is people willing to use laws -- shields to protect the environment to further their own policy goals. In this case, they're trying to take shields that protect wildlife, that protect public health, and turning them to swords to fight growth, to use them for growth control.

You have to understand, wastewater is purely a utility. The cities are going to build a system -- the utility department is going to build a system to serve the needs of the City. You cannot use wastewater to control growth.

In fact, if you go for an expensive plan where high per capita costs are involved, it can only increase growth, because if the City doesn't meet its growth potential, then costs are going to go up per capita. River discharge has actually the best growth control in it. Then, if the City expands beyond what its intended growth would be, they may end up having to pay more for sewage disposal.

This has been a very complex issue, and we've had a lot of people making a lot of wild claims in a lot of different directions. I think what you got to get back to is listen to what the department of public health is saying. Listen to what the department of fish and game is saying. Listen to the biologists over at the regional water control board. Listen to the biologists at fish and wildlife service. I think that's where you're going to find the real answers to these questions. Thank you.

Mayor Wright:

Thank you Steve. Lawrence Bulinski. Is Lawrence Bulinski in the audience? Ann Maurice.