

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
P.O. Box 1678
Santa Rosa, CA 95402

Madam Mayor, Members of the Council and Board of Public Utilities:

SEP 24 1996

My name is Mike Reilly. I am a candidate for County Supervisor in the 5th District. DEPARTMENT OF 001
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
that the purpose of this hearing is to accept comments relative to the adequacy of the draft EIR.

I must, though, preface my comments regarding the adequacy of this document with some broader observations borne of my eleven years involvement with this issue. I was at the first meeting in 1985 when city representatives informed state and county officials that a massive illegal release of sewage into the Russian River was imminent and could not be avoided.

In that single act, the City damaged the River and put the health and economy of thousands of residents along the lower Russian River at risk. At that time and at the urging of state water authorities, Santa Rosa officials promised a long term solution that would end discharge into the river.

The Russian River, then as now, is the single most important environmental and economic resource in Sonoma County. It is vital to both tourism and agriculture and serves as the drinking water source to 600,000 people in our region. It needs and deserves protection from all of us.

So now as we look at adequacy of the draft EIR, we find a report which concludes that the least costly and environmentally preferred alternative is discharge to the River at up to twenty times the currently allowable rate. This both defies reason and ignores history.

This EIR is a plan, first and foremost, to accommodate future growth in our county. 002 003 I want to tell you, as clearly as I can, we should not and we will not allow the Russian River to be jeopardized for the purpose of promoting growth in Sonoma County.

The council needs to aggressively scrutinize the adequacy of these findings prior to certification.

A major failing of the EIR is the decision to exclude study of small storage facilities. All of the irrigation/reuse alternatives are burdened with the up front costs of major storage facilities. These expensive projects which would be financed by ratepayers with years of interest costs constitute a major barrier to the economic viability of reuse alternatives. 004

Your cost/benefit analysis concludes that there are significant job and economic benefits to expanded agricultural reuse and zero benefit forever to River discharge. The projected number of new jobs created by reuse alone could equal another Hewlett Packard in our county, 005

Virtually everyone agrees that reuse is preferable if it can be made affordable to ratepayers. There are water quality districts in California which require 100% reuse. 006 The draft EIR fails to seriously explore a phased "pay as you grow" project which would involve many smaller storage sites and the potential for cost participation from farmers through government grants and loans not available to the city. The Koretsky/King study identified some fifty such potential storage sites in the south county alone. The ability of agricultural partners to gain necessary permits for storage on private land are vastly simpler and less costly than City costs for major storage sites.

The pipeline to the Gallo storage site in Cotati cost the city less than one million dollars. Even fifty such projects should cost far less than the \$250 to \$350 million dollar price tag of major storage sites studied in the EIR.

