

My name is Anne Seeley. As chairwoman of Concerned Citizens for Santa Rosa and a member of SCOR, I would like to offer my thoughts on the interests of the ratepayers. 001

What the ratepayers require of a wastewater system is that it be reliable, as low cost as possible, and if they are environmentally aware, that the system be environmentally responsible. Crucial to all three factors is the assessment that the system does not provoke an endless, expensive train of lawsuits.

The system proposed by SCOR meets those requirements well; first, by being reliable in providing the three components necessary: treatment, adequate storage, and disposal in a verifiable manner.

For the second requirement, low cost, the proposal provides benefits that no other single alternative does. Because of the phasing in of the project, several things occur. The City does not have to bond, at great expense, for a huge amount of money for a giant public works project. If there is no huge "front-loaded" cost at the outset, debt service will be considerably less. And if we enter difficult economic times in which there is less than projected City growth, we simply slow down the growth of the system. With a "front loaded", big-money project, if City growth slows, the current ratepayers suffer under the burden of greatly increased rates to pay for future growth, and rising hook-up costs for new housing and businesses make affordability almost impossible. 002

Phasing in the system also allows for the gradual development of interest and trust between the farming community and the cities. As improvement in crop production spreads, so will the word that "this stuff is great for agriculture and it's not hard for farmers to deal with the system." Eventually, cost recovery for system operation and maintenance could be mostly covered by payments for the water. In this manner, agricultural values would take a prolonged jump, providing a better Sonoma County economy, more jobs and support for related industries, AND the ratepayer's costs would reduce. 003

The third ratepayer concern, environmental responsibility, is more than adequately met by this system which maximally reuses a precious (and expensive) resource. With reclaimed water for agriculture as well as urban irrigation uses, further development of new or expanded drinking water sources is delayed. 004

The SCOR proposal may be most notable for preventing the single most expensive and disagreeable outcome of other alternatives: the big lawsuit. This eminent advantage results from a cooperative process among most of the stakeholders who might legally object to a chosen alternative, and, quite simply, from having found an alternative acceptable to all. The possibility of prolonged legal objection is a financial concern for ratepayers, who would pay for another set of environmental studies, more attorneys' fees, and any penalties the system incurs for delays in building a viable solution. The ratepayers need a system that works for everyone.

In closing, I want to emphasize that it is critical that project "phasability" be included as an option in this EIR.]

Thank you.