

My name is Robert Albert and I am a resident of Bakersfield, CA, born here in town in 1963 and spent most of my life here. As a person who is keenly interested in our history, I feel that the move to have water once again flow through town connects us directly with our past. I remember my grandmother talking about knowing folks who lived in a Hooverville in town near the river during the Depression, and how the river would crest every year and flood areas of downtown. Okay, so I don't recommend returning to those EXACT days, had it not been for the Kern River, this town would likely not have sprung up here.

Other beneficial reasons for returning to consistent flow of water down the riverbed through town are: city beautification; return flora and fauna and wildlife to the area; provide recreational use of many varieties; it would also help to refill the aquifer beneath our town, providing us a water bank for use in drier times; it would take some of the pressure off the parts of the river that may get overuse, like the canyon and Lake Isabella and Kernville areas; and there are perhaps many more reasons for passing such legislation to do so.

I know that there are undoubtedly a plethora of folks who oppose this, whether for agricultural or water resources reasons. They will have their pie charts and countless studies to show why we shouldn't do something like allow our river to once again flow down its historical riverbed. Sometimes it is not always about figures and calculations. Sometimes it is just about doing what is right. It the kind of decision that has countless intangible benefits that won't fit neatly on a spreadsheet. I hope that this governing body will see fit to allow us to use water that is available to once again flow down through our beloved town. It's hard to believe that we live in a time where a natural resource, created by the hand of God and around here for thousands of years, can be owned, diverted, bartered and sold right out from under our feet.

Thank you for take time to read my comments. It is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

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