

Dick Rotter: Poisons taint water project

By Dick Rotter, Guest commentary

Posted: 11/21/15, 4:29 PM PST|Updated: 1 week, 5 days ago

[4 Comments](#)

The Board of Supervisors has approved the Ground Water Replenishment (GWR) project, giving it a new name, the Pure Water initiative. The approval included the Blanco drain and the Reclamation Ditch runoff water. This water contains historic levels of DDT, DDE, arsenic and mercury, and was rejected five years ago by the Central Coast Regional Control Board as unfit for use in agriculture, much less potable water. Why shouldn't the Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency, (MRWPCA) be made to produce solid scientific data, and a study that conclusively proves this poison is recyclable, to the legal point of being injectable into a fresh groundwater aquifer, instead of hapless theory and false assurances?

Cornell University, in an industry definitive study, determined that the DDT, etc., in the Central Coast region has the highest concentration in California, has a 150-year reservoir of supply, and is not capable of being cleaned to drinking water standards. Other university studies have drawn the same conclusion. What specific scientific study does the MRWPCA possess that disputes these findings? If it exists, would they please share it with the public?

Depending on the ultimate findings and nature of the recycled water, the Salinas Water Regional Control Board may require a one-for-one blend of "fresh potable" water for injection into a freshwater aquifer with the recycle. It would take 3,500 acre-feet of fresh potable water to do the blending. Where does this 3,500 acre-feet of fresh potable water come from?

Salinas Valley farmers are endorsing this project. Why? The agriculture industry has a huge regulatory problem and it is the cleaning of the polluted waterways, created by them. They are required by the state to clean the Blanco drain of the DDT, DDE, arsenic and mercury, and the Reclamation Ditch of pollutants. So far they have done nothing and the costs will be tens of millions of dollars. The solution: sell the poison to the Peninsula and let them clean it. If the tens of millions of dollars are added to the cost of producing 3,500 acre-feet of fresh drinking water to clean these problems, does it make the cost of GWR (the Pure Water initiative) prohibitive?

I can accept recycled sewage water, if needed, but not DDT, DDE, arsenic and mercury. Let's build an affordable desalination plant and get on with it.

Dick Rotter lives in Corral de Tierra.