



October 10, 2024

Board of Directors
Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water)
5750 Almaden Expy.,
San Jose, CA 95118

Dear Valley Water Board of Directors,

On behalf of Gardner Health Services, I am writing to express my support for the Good Neighbor Program, and the initiative in clean-up of the unhoused community encampments on Valley Water. We understand health and safety, as well as the environmental impacts this poses to Santa Clara Valley Water.

The Good Neighbor Program, funded by the Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Program, represents a proactive public health approach, investing \$38.7 million over 15 years into encampment cleanups. This investment ensures that our waterways and neighborhoods remain safe and clean.

Gardner Health Services has nearly sixty (60) years of experience in providing high-quality, high-value, and culturally appropriate healthcare services in the prevention, intervention, and healing of the body, mind, and spirit. Within our healthcare services, we offer patients and the community access to medical, behavioral, and auxiliary services.

Currently, there are over 10,000 unhoused people living in Santa Clara County. Our Healthcare for the Homeless Project allows us to have two (2) mobile units with the ability to be agile, and adaptable to demands of our community.

We support the coordinated efforts of Valley Water, and local agencies in addressing the safety and environmental concerns related to unhoused encampments. We believe maintaining safe access to water infrastructure is key to ensuring water quality, and wildlife habitation.

As such, we would like to offer our valuable resources for consideration in this effort, to support our unhoused communities not only for medical and behavioral services, but also aiding in the need of housing alternatives.

Thank you for your time and we look forward in partnering with Valley Water, and other agencies in progressing the Good Neighbor Program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Rafael Vaquerano'.

Rafael Vaquerano, MPH
President & CEO
Gardner Health Services

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