

From: Lames <lames@aol.com>

Sent: Monday, July 13, 2026 1:30 PM

To: Clerk of the Board <clerkoftheboard@valleywater.org>

Subject: Please attach to the Agenda 7/14/2026 Item 2.3 (Closed Session)

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Hi,

Please find attached a letter I've written to the San Jose Unified School District (SJUSD) Board regarding their reaction to the Valley Water's flood control measures in the vicinity of Selma Olinder Elementary School, which the Water Board is to discuss in Closed Session tomorrow.

Thanks!

~Larry Ames

Board of Directors,
San José Unified School District
via email, sent July 13, 2026

re: Flood-control measures for Selma Olinder Elementary School

Dear SJUSD Directors,

I am writing to express my extreme displeasure with your recent reactions regarding Valley Water's planned flood-control measures along the Coyote Creek in the vicinity of Olinder Elementary School.

Valley Water has been working with stakeholders (including SJUSD) and the community for some years now to find a cost-effective and environmentally-sensitive solution to protect both people and property. The result is a plan to construct a system of floodwalls and passive flood barriers – a plan that has gone through the full CEQA/EIR review process and is now out for bid.

But now, at this late stage in the process, you at SJUSD are seeking significant changes to the plan?! As I understand it, the Valley Water plan is to protect the buildings at Olinder School with a set of pop-up flood barriers, but SJUSD is now asking for concrete walls to keep floodwater off of the *entire* school property, including playgrounds and parking lots. Given the topology of the parcel, this would require floodwalls 12 feet tall in areas near the creek. Such walls would isolate the Coyote Creek Trail, creating “blind spots” where “unsavory elements” could lurk; also, the walls would trap trail users by blocking any escape: the trail would likely become so dangerous that the City would have to close it. Additionally, the construction of a wall along the property line would impact a sensitive riparian (“streamside”) habitat and also require the removal of numerous well-established trees. And, changing the design to include the wall would require a whole new CEQA environmental review cycle, including analyses of downstream impacts such as scouring and changed floodwater levels at the adjacent properties; and it would also require a new construction bid process – all of which would significantly delay the implementation of the project and would expose nearby residents to the threat of floods for *years*.

Why is it important to SJUSD that floodwaters be kept off of the *entire* parcel? – a little floodwater won't significantly hurt the playgrounds or the parking lots. Is the real reason a desire to increase the potential value of the parcel, in case SJUSD were to close the school and sell off the land? Remember: you on the school board are supposed to be acting on behalf of the *community*, and to be thinking not of profits but instead about our overall best interests – and removing trees, damaging the environment, severing a popular recreational trail, and delaying for years the needed flood protection for the surrounding community, all for a modest increase in perceived land value, is *not* in the community's overall best interest! (And, if you do think that that actually is in the community's best interest, I will join others in actively organizing opposition to your re-election campaigns, future revenue measures, and any applications to the City of San José to redevelop the land!)

I urge you to drop your objections to the Valley Water's flood-control plans and let the project begin construction this October as planned.

Thank you,



Dr. Lawrence Ames, parent and longtime trail, park, community, and environmental advocate.

cc: SJUSD Superintendent; Valley Water CEO and Board; San José Mayor, Council, and PRNS; Co. BoS.

email to:

Jose Magana, Board President, Area 2 jmagana@sjusd.org

Brian Wheatley Area 4 bwheatley@sjusd.org

Carla Collins Area 3 ccollins@sjusd.org

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Nicole Gribstad, Area 5, ngribstad@sjusd.org

cc:

San Jose Unified School District

Nancy Albarran Superintendent nalbarran@sjusd.org

Seth Reddy, Chief Business Officer, sreddy@sjusd.org

Valley Water

- Melanie Richardson, Interim CEO, mrichardson@valleywater.org
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City of San Jose

- Matt Mahan, matt.mahan@sanjoseca.gov
- Bien Doan District 7; Anthony Tordillos District 3; David Cohen, District 4
- Jennifer Maguire, City Manager; Lee Wilcox Assistant City Manager Leland.Wilcox@SanJoseCA.gov
- Jon Cicirelli, Director PRNS; Raymond Costantino, Deputy Director PRNS

Board of Supervisors

- Betty Duong: District2@bos.sccgov.org

Follow-up emails:

- General email correspondence to ClerkoftheBoard@valleywater.org
- **NOTE: Please attach to the Agenda 7/14/2026 Item 2.3 (Closed Session)**

FYI copies to:

David Cortese, Ash Kalra.

Five Wounds: Davide, Joan, Terry, Alie; Keith Ball

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