

January 14, 2025

Valley Water Board of Directors
5750 Almaden Expressway
San Jose, CA 95118

Honorable Chair Estremera and Members of the Valley Water Board of Directors,

As elected representatives of the residents of Palo Alto and the surrounding region, we write to express our strong support for Valley Water's continued partnership with the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority (SFCJPA) and to urge you to renew your commitment to addressing the persistent flood risks faced by our communities.

On December 6, 2024, Valley Water's Board Policy and Monitoring Committee reviewed Valley Water's involvement with the SFCJPA and its projects. We are deeply concerned about the potential withdrawal of Valley Water from this vital partnership, particularly given the inaccuracies presented during that meeting regarding the history and structure of the SFCJPA's efforts. We hope to correct the record and emphasize the importance of maintaining this collaboration to protect our region from flooding risks associated with the San Francisquito Creek.

Clarifying Key Facts

1. **Design Leadership on the Reach 1 Project:**

The SFCJPA, not Valley Water, held the contracts for project design, and for the majority of the contracts for the completed Reach 1 Project. While Valley Water held the construction contract and reimbursed costs through the previous Measure B parcel tax, it did not hold all the contracts.

2. **Reach 2 Project Funding:**

Using Measure S funds, Valley Water contributes 20% of the SFCJPA operating budget, which includes the current Reach 2 re-design budget, and is the same proportional funding as the other four agencies in the JPA. This funding also supports JPA operations, completed Reach 1 project maintenance, and community outreach and is shared equally among all five SFCJPA members.

3. **Board Representation:**

Valley Water's representation on the SFCJPA Board remains unchanged since the JPA's inception, ensuring equal participation alongside other member agencies. The membership agreement has undergone multiple revisions in recent years, providing Valley Water with several opportunities to propose changes to their representation. However, Valley Water did not request any modifications and instead voted in favor of the updated agreement.

4. **Design Oversight Transfer:**

The decision for SFCJPA to assume project design roles was mutually agreed upon, with Valley Water encouraging this transition to promote equitable cost-sharing and preserve Measure S funds for construction.

The Path Forward

The December 6 Valley Water's Policy and Monitoring Committee staff report highlighted funding gaps and jurisdictional complexities. In fact, it is the jurisdictional complexity of San Francisquito Creek itself – defining the boundaries of two counties and three cities – that necessitated the creation of SFCJPA itself. While these challenges are acknowledged, the SFCJPA and its member agencies have demonstrated a consistent ability to collaborate, secure grants, and pursue solutions. Notably, Valley Water's FY 23-24 Annual Report affirmed confidence in continued cooperation and emphasized the commitment to flood protection for San Francisquito Creek.

Given the region's vulnerability to flooding and the shared responsibility for long-term resilience, we strongly encourage Valley Water to maintain its role within the SFCJPA. The genesis of the JPA was for multi-jurisdictional collaboration in addressing flood risks that transcend municipal boundaries. The other members of the SFCJPA are cognizant of their responsibility to contribute financially to the long-term success of the Reach 2 project and as they did previously, will work collaboratively again to address funding needs.

Together with the other SFCJPA members, and with the support of Valley Water, we can successfully complete the Reach 2 Project and meet the expectations of our residents for safety and environmental stewardship.

We urge the Valley Water Board of Directors to reaffirm its partnership with the SFCJPA and continue to work collaboratively toward effective flood protection solutions. This shared responsibility is the mutual obligation of all elected representatives and we believe the success of the Reach 2 Project is of critical importance. Together, we can build on the progress made and ensure the safety and security of our communities

Thank you for your time and consideration. We welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further and support any efforts to strengthen our shared commitment to flood protection.

Sincerely,



Greer Stone
Vice Chair, San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority
Councilmember, City of Palo Alto

Co-signed by:

Margaret Abe-Koga
Supervisor, County of Santa Clara