

Re: Comments Regarding Proposed Modification of Project E5 Key Performance Indicators — San Francisquito Creek Reach 2 — August 11, 2026 Public Hearing, Agenda Item 3.4

Dear Chair Estremera and Members of the Valley Water Board.

I am a resident of the San Francisquito Creek flood zone in northern Palo Alto, speaking on behalf of the Creek Neighborhood Group and the Crescent Park Neighborhood Association — representing over 1,000 resident email addresses.

I previously wrote to you about Agenda Item 3.4 (Handout 3.4-F: T. Rindfleisch, July 14) and spoke at previous VW Board meetings (June 23 and July 14). I strongly urged you to maintain Project E5 (San Francisquito Creek, Reach 2) as a full Capital Improvement Project, retain its outcome-based KPI commitment to 70-year flood protection, and re-engage as an active technical partner with the San Francisquito Creek JPA in project delivery, rather than replacing the E5 KPI with a funding-only metric.

The situation at the SFCJPA changed substantially immediately after the July 14 VW Board meeting with the departure of the SFCJPA Executive Director effective immediately, and the imminent departure of a Project Manager by the end of August. Only an interim Executive Director and administrator remain and the SFCJPA Board has not had an opportunity to meet to determine the next steps to restore a successor JPA management structure.

For these reasons, I fully support the detailed request in Mr. Jeffrey Shore's letter of August 5 that the VW Board delay its decision on the E5 KPI change until a new project leadership structure can be considered to reestablish a productive and cooperative relationship between VW and the JPA.

To reiterate the context of our commitment as citizens to the E5 flood control project, I want to remind you of three points.

First: Valley Water's own track record shows that joint project leadership with SFCJPA works. Palo Alto and Crescent Park voted over 70% "yes" on Measures B and S because we trusted Valley Water's technical and project management expertise to implement flood controls to protect us. Reach 1 proved that trust was warranted — completed in 2019, on time, and meeting its Key Performance Indicators. We are alarmed that Valley Water is now proposing to step back into a passive funding role on Reach 2, precisely when we are heading into a rainy season with a projected extreme El Niño event that could exceed that of 1997/1998, which led to the flood of record that damaged 1,500 homes.

Second: the SFCJPA didn't choose a sole leadership role for Reach 2 — it inherited it. After the 2022 New Year's Eve flood event, Valley Water's own revised modeling concluded the Reach 2 design could no longer deliver 7,200 cfs protection.

The JPA didn't walk away from that finding — it stepped up and commissioned independent validation, and the resulting studies now show there ARE viable alternatives that can protect every Reach 2 resident to 7,200 cfs, including replacing the Pope-Chaucer bridge. That technical progress is a JPA success story. It should be the basis for Valley Water re-engaging, not for stepping back.

Third: funding follows credibility, and credibility requires Valley Water. Any Reach 2 solution will only attract funding if it carries the confidence that comes from being led by the most experienced agency in this partnership. That agency is Valley Water.

So, my long-term request is to keep SFC Reach 2 as a full Capital Improvement Project, retain the outcome-based 70-year flood protection KPI, and re-engage as a jointly leading technical partner with the SFCJPA. In the short-term, I urge you to delay your decision on the E5 KPI change until a new JPA leadership structure can be considered to reestablish a productive and cooperative relationship between VW and the JPA.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

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cc: Greer Stone, Chairperson, SFCJPA Board
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