

Michele King

From: Santa Clara Valley Water <system-generated@valleywater.org>
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Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter

Board Meeting Date

2024-04-09

Agenda Item Number

3.4

I would like to

No Position--Comment Only

Comment Form

The Sierra Club has not commented during this year's CIP/Budget/Rate-setting process since we know from experience that our concerns will not be addressed through this process. Nevertheless, we want to provide for the record the issues that we have brought up to the Board many times in the past.

In the past, we have consistently expressed our concern that future increases in water demand should be more conservative. On its face, the water demand rebound used for the rate-setting process seems questionable. The expected rebound did not occur in 2023, so it is unclear why a 16,000 acre/foot per year rebound is forecast for both 2024 and 2025. Historically water usage has gone up and down with a general downward trend. The assumption that water usage will only go up in the future seems unrealistic. There will be droughts and reduced usage between now and 2034. That said, we do appreciate that Valley Water has moved towards more conservative demand projections over the past several years.

More importantly, we are concerned about the Pacheco Reservoir Project and the Delta Conveyance Project, which are

huge and very environmentally destructive projects. Current cost estimates for these projects are preliminary, and extremely large and unprecedented projects such as these will have unpredictable future cost increases. The cost increases for Anderson Reservoir are indicative even though it is much less complex than either of these projects. Average household water bills already are forecasted to increase by more than \$100/month over the next 10 years. If these projects go forward, rate increases will undoubtably be significantly more than that, and will continue far beyond the current 10-year projections.

As a side note, it is regrettable that we do not have updated cost projections for Pacheco and the Delta Conveyance yet. This information is crucial for the Water Supply Master Plan Update, and we urge you to make sure that new estimates are available and integrated into that plan update.

These comments apply to all three parts of this process: this rate-setting item, the following item on the Capital Improvement Program, and the budget.

Thank you for your consideration.