



## Amigos de Guadalupe

Center for Justice & Empowerment

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS  
2012 – 2022

Santa Clara Valley Water District Board of Directors  
5700 Almaden Expressway  
San Jose, CA 95123

July 9, 2024

Subject: Opposition to Item 3.5 - Proposed Water Resources Protection Zones Ordinance

Dear Valley Water Board of Directors,

Amigos de Guadalupe Center for Justice and Empowerment writes in strong opposition to Item 3.5, the Proposed Water Resources Protection Zones Ordinance, as it unjustly penalizes unhoused individuals when there is nowhere near enough shelter available in Santa Clara County to properly house everyone. This type of criminalization can best be understood as a policy response that attempts to address homelessness by penalizing people who lack housing, and lacks the dignity and empathy all individuals deserve.

We also look at the unintended additional harm that this proposed ordinance can cause for unhoused individuals. A 2020 Oxford Academic study found that criminalization of the unhoused can actually make housing less accessible, and “perpetuates homelessness” by “systematically limiting homeless people's access to services, housing, and jobs, while damaging their health, safety, and well-being.”

As a community nonprofit that operates 3 interim housing developments and 5 safe park sites, we understand the need for creative solutions to addressing our housing crisis, and this ordinance is not one of them. We hope we can collaborate with Valley Water District and other agencies to find solutions that are more dignified. Therefore, we urge the Board to vote “No” on the proposed ordinance.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to continuing to work together to create a just and equitable society for all families in Santa Clara County for years to come.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maritza Maldonado".

Maritza Maldonado  
Founding Executive Director  
Amigos de Guadalupe Center for Justice and Empowerment

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