

December 2, 2015

Santa Clara Valley Water District
Office of the Clerk of the Board
5750 Almaden Expressway
San Jose, CA 95118

RE: District 1 Director Membership

Dear Ms. King,

I am applying for the SCVWD Board of Directors District 1 seat. My name is Laura Quemada. I am currently a resident of, and plan to reside in, Morgan Hill for the duration of the term. I am also a qualified elector. My background in geology and hydrology, and an active interest in water resources management and planning, makes me a strong candidate for membership. My application for board membership is attached.

My contact numbers are [REDACTED] and I am available at any time should you wish to discuss any aspect of my application.

Regards,

Laura Quemada

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APPLICATION FOR
SANTA CLARA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS - DISTRICT 1

Please complete this application in its entirety and submit an original signed copy along with a letter of interest containing your name, residence address, occupation, summary of interest in the position, and any other relevant qualifications and experience, to the Office of the Clerk of the Board at 5750 Almaden Expressway, San Jose, California 95118, by 4:00 p.m. Wednesday, December 2, 2015.

A. CONTACT INFORMATION

Name (First, Last): Laura F. Quemada			
Residence Address (Street Address, City, State, Zip): [REDACTED] Morgan Hill, CA 95037			
Home Phone: [REDACTED]	Work Phone: N/A	Cell Phone: [REDACTED]	E-Mail: [REDACTED]

B. QUALIFYING SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS (Please use separate sheet of paper if necessary)

1. Explain why you think you should be appointed to the District 1 Board of Directors seat.

Most people probably don't think about their water beyond turning on their faucet or when their bill arrives, and for most people, that's okay. Santa Clara Valley Water District is there to do the thinking and planning for them. I think I should be appointed to the District 1 Board of Directors seat because I want to be a part of the stewardship of what I believe is our most valuable resource. Water is a limited resource. Planning is essential that we conserve, recycle, and replenish our supply for both current and future use.

District 1 is the largest district in terms of land area, and the variety of water users in this area have concerns which must be heard and weighed in a careful and judicious manner. Nearly one-half of water used in South County is agricultural. Flood Control programs are also key in this area. I believe I can fairly represent and communicate with SCVWD customers in District 1.

2. Describe the experience you have that will assist you with the responsibilities required of you while serving as a member of the Board of Directors.

I have a Bachelor's degree in Geology (Cal Poly, Pomona) and a Master's degree in Hydrology (New Mexico Institute of Mines and Technology). I have a professional background in the public sector of groundwater management, having worked for Orange County Water District, and in the private sector of groundwater contamination and remediation. I have lived 17 years in the dynamic South Santa Clara Valley, all of them in Morgan Hill. This combination of education and experience allows me to bring a unique perspective to managing water resources in an area that is yet a combination of agricultural, residential and industrial water usage.

3. A. What are your detailed thoughts on the current SCVWD practice of using parcel (property) taxes for State Water Project costs versus having the water consumers pay for 100% of these costs?

B. If some of the costs are to be paid by property owners, should certain property owners who are not able to receive any water from the SCVWD despite asking for water, be required to pay the costs?

A. This current SCVWD practice comes up for a renewal vote in 2016 in some areas, and it is a very contentious issue. To be honest, what I know about this issue is what I have read in the paper and on-line. Perhaps the issue should be viewed from a perspective of "what can our district get for the money we are paying" rather than "we are taxed for something we are not getting." SCVWD is about more than just water supply, and North County is more than just water users. Are there environmental projects or partnerships that can be considered in North County? Because, really, I think the current practice of using parcel taxes for SWP costs does benefit all of Santa Clara County, not just a part of it.

B. Property owners who don't receive any benefit from SCVWD shouldn't be required to pay. If, however, they pump their water, they receive a benefit from the fact that their groundwater levels have not been reduced to the point where they have to drill a new, deeper, well.

4. Agricultural water rates in both North and South County are heavily subsidized by water consumers and tax payers in Morgan Hill, Gilroy and others. Please explain your reasoning behind supporting the continuation of the rapidly expanding "open space credit" expense or reducing that expense so the SCVWD can use those funds for conservation, reduced water rates and other projects.

I support the continuation of the Open Space Credit. Agricultural users have been rapidly pushed out of the Silicon Valley due to rising population and land and operating costs. Yet the benefit they bring to an area contributes to our overall quality of life. Agricultural spaces, devoid of the noise of "development" are a sanctuary of rest for the eye and the ear. Silicon Valley has wonderful, open-air farmers' markets, where farm fresh produce is available without the extra transportation time and cost. Local agriculture provides a reliable, local food source within Santa Clara Valley. Keeping agricultural costs down allows for lower prices for foods that we place on our tables. I think SCVWD should continue to work with agricultural interests to maintain their presence in the valley.

5. What do you think will be the most significant challenges that the District will be facing in the next few years?

I think the most significant challenge for SCVWD will be to continue to provide a reliable water source for all its users in a cost-efficient manner. Water rates have continued to rise throughout much of the world, and Santa Clara Valley is no different. Political and economic pressures will continue to clamor for lower payments. Planning for future impacts is essential.

As the number of water users increases in Silicon Valley, the demand will rise for a scarcer resource. So I think the next significant challenge for SCVWD will be locating new or alternative water resources. Recycled or reclaimed water must become a part of that solution. Overcoming the public's distrust of their usage will be a huge challenge.



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6. What three items would be your highest priority if you are appointed as a SCVWD District 1 Board Member?

1. Fairly representing the concerns of all water users in District 1.
2. An investment in water reclamation technology, supplementing an increase in water recycling for agricultural and landscape uses.
3. Completion of the flood control projects in South County, and implementation of new projects as needed.

Laura Quemada
Applicant Signature

Dec. 2, 2015
Date Signed