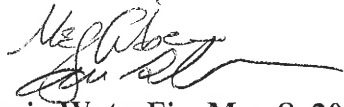


May 8, 2018  
Via hand delivery

TO: The Honorable Chair Santos and Members of the Santa Clara Valley Water District Board

FROM: Alan and Meg Giberson 

RE: **Special Board Meeting on California WaterFix, May 8, 2018, Item 2.1**

This “WaterFix” project should be rejected.

Insufficient information about the California WaterFix project (CWF, the twin tunnels) has made it impossible for agencies—including the Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD)—and the public to be able to review it in an informed manner. (*See, e.g.,* Giberson comments and memos to the SCVWD board, memos dated May 1, 2018, October 13, 2017, September 19, 2017, hereby included as if fully set forth herein.)

The uncertainty resulting from this lack of information frustrates the intent and letter of California’s Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), making the project unripe for either a CEQA determination or vote by SCVWD. CWF uncertainties include without limitation: the ultimate cost of the project; the ultimate cost per acre-foot of WaterFix water; the project’s ultimate design (due to the project’s extremely preliminary design stage); the agreements that will determine JPA function and control; ultimate total Santa Clara Valley Water District contribution that will be required; the ultimate amounts of water available, and likely harm to the environment if WaterFix moves forward.

Feasible measures that could minimize significant adverse impacts of the project have been downplayed or ignored in SCVWD reports. Local water from captured stormwater or from Publicly Owned Treatment Works (POTWs) could easily replace future deficits due to climate change and restrictions due to environmental protection. Such alternatives could function more reliably than CWF to provide both water for areas like ours to the south of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay-Delta (Delta) and adequate water to increase flows through the Delta to improve water quality, habitat and the environment.

These alternatives have been repeatedly suggested by the public, but have been ignored or refused in agency review. Delta salinity levels have increased since the 1970s, due to increases in upstream storage and Delta exports. The tunnels would divert the largest remaining source of fresh water, the Sacramento River, with no assurance that the SWP or CVP will be operated differently in the future to comply with salinity standards. Use of local sources of water will avoid those impacts by leaving necessary flows to the Delta and estuary ecosystem—a result that will not be achieved by this tunnels project, which is promoted by SCVWD as providing even more northern California water for use to the south.

Cost alone should cause SCVWD to reject CWF. The tunnels will be much more costly than the reported \$17 billion. As Director Lezotte said at the May 2, 2018, board meeting, she doesn't trust the stated cost estimate for a minute. California has seen clear examples of cost overruns from major projects; the Bay Bridge is a local example. The cost of tunneling is even more unsure. The recent 2.5 mile expansion to the LA subway system, for instance, reportedly cost "nearly \$1 billion per mile". (See: <https://www.teslarati.com/boring-company-cost-cutting-plan-boring-company-cheaper-faster-tunnel-digging/> ) Surging construction costs will drive up not only the total project cost, but the eventual cost per acre-foot of CWF water.

The suggestion in recent SCVWD documents that having a seat at the JPA table will allow SCVWD to somehow control outcomes (of design, ecosystem restoration, etc.) ignores the reality of its single vote on those issues versus the multiple votes of the very same southern California interests that are driving this "fix", the CWF. Further, the suggestion (in Handout 2.1-F, May 8, 2018) that two current board members be appointed "to serve on the Board of Directors of the Design and Construction JPA for the first two years following formation" ignores the fact that those two directors' terms end in November. If they were selected to serve on that JPA, and were not re-elected, whose interests would they then be representing?

Much of the CWF has yet to be determined (the need to "negotiate" acceptable future terms, for instance, is mentioned five times on a single page of the Handout 2.1-F, May 8, 2018). Terms and conditions, risk reduction, costs, actual benefit to the environment are all uncertain. Adaptive management, like so much regarding CWF, is being left to future determinations.

The only certain thing about WaterFix now is that it should not move forward.