

Michele King

From: Dhruv Khanna <dhruvkhanna2002@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, January 07, 2019 4:09 PM
To: Board of Directors
Cc: Jan Garrod; Sherrie Kennedy; Sherrie Kennedy; Janet Burback; Tim Chiala; Pete Aiello; Jess Brown; Paul Mirassou
Subject: Staff latest analysis on Open Space Credit

Honorable Directors,

I have only had a brief opportunity to digest and ask questions about the presentation the Ag Advisory Committee received today from Water District Staff.

First, I remain deeply concerned that Staff remains in the same analytical box relying in a short-sighted way on our few remaining farmers to contribute money to vast projects in a way that necessarily makes no mathematical or economic sense: there's just not enough money in farmers' pockets to pay for the things that Staff is looking to fund.

Second, Staff has not bothered to collect important data such as whether the acreage under the Williamson Act or Conservation Easements subject to farming is increasing, decreasing or staying constant. I asked this question at today's meeting and was told that Staff lacks this information. Without such information, how can one assess the impact of treating differently for water rate purposes farming on Williamson Act lands and farming on lands that are not subject to the Williamson Act?

Third, here we have staff once again *cherry picking* its data for presentation by claiming that there has been a "24% increase in harvested acreage" between 2011 and 2017 from 18,424 acres to 22,783 acres. What Staff neglects to point out that over **"the past 30 years alone, Santa Clara County has lost 21,171 acres of its farmland and rangeland to development, an additional 28,391 acres of farmland and rangeland in the County are at risk of conversion going forward."** Santa Clara Valley Agricultural Plan, December 5, 2017, page 1 (emphasis added).

The different numbers from different government agencies -- each with its own agenda -- have placed farmers in an untenable position: we are being squeezed on all sides -- we must farm, we must not develop, we must pay ever-escalating water rates, ever-escalating wages, comply with increasing regulations, deal with urban trash (literally), traffic problems, housing shortages, homelessness, and San Jose's and other trial lawyers.

I return to my original plea from last year: please sit down with the County, cities within the County, the State, LAFCO and others and figure out how best to tax or otherwise collect funds for the District's projects. Seeking to extract the needed funds from the County's few remaining farmers makes no mathematical or economic sense. It is frustrating and disappointing to see lack of progress in your Staff's thinking on these matters. Thank you,

Dhruv Khanna for Kirigin Cellars and himself