

Handout 2.6c
4/9/19

Melissa Stone

From: Dhruv Khanna <dhruvkhanna2002@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, April 08, 2019 7:27 AM
To: Dave Vanni; Board of Directors; Mike Wasserman; Rob Eastwood
Cc: Jan Garrod; Sherrie Kennedy; Sherrie Kennedy; Steve Dorcich; Nick Dorcich; Jess Brown; Paul Mirassou; Chris Borello; Satori Cellars / Tom & Sandy Moller; Tim Chiala; Ian Teresi; Russ Bonino; Don Hordness
Subject: 19.3 per cent proposed ag water rate increase and ag land use

Honorable Chair of the SCVWD Ag water advisory Committee, Honorable SCVWD Directors and Honorable County officials,

***Agriculture and water usage are inextricably linked to each other, and thus to agricultural land use**

*In recent years, the SCVWD has increased ag groundwater production rates annually and extravagantly *by about 6-7% each year*, these annual water rate increases are non-trivial and are contrary to the County's policies to preserve and enhance ag in our County

*Ag groundwater rate increases do not promote the survival of the remaining ag in our County

*SCVWD staff has once again proposed another lavish rate hike for ag ground water charges: *almost 20%!*

*This is an effort by the SCVWD to raise **a couple of extra million dollars towards a \$500 Million dollar project** to enhance the public safety of the Anderson Dam through a seismic retrofit. (This is like trying to fill the reservoir itself with pail-fulls of water.)

*By now, and based on the above, I must -- with great reluctance -- refer to the SCVWD staff's efforts, undertaken with persistence and zeal over the past decade, as **inherently and inevitably futile and therefore a grotesque illustration of the SCVWD's staff's monumental under-competence.**

*Meanwhile, the County of Santa Clara itself has consistently limited development of ag-zoned lands thereby reducing our land values, reducing economic activity in South County and harming the efforts of wineries and other farmers to increase direct sales and obtain revenues from events. For example, the County has been violating a federal law known as RLUIPA for almost two decades with the direct effect of illegally reducing development in South County through the County's "local serving" land-use restrictions

*There is no question that the efforts of the County to limit development of ag lands is fundamentally at odds with the SCVWD's ever-increasing ag water rates -- *both of which have placed our County farmers in a hopeless no-win, no-way-out bind.*

Based on the above, **I respectfully ask and move that** the Ag Water Advisory Committee (AWAC) today:

1. Vote to oppose and urge the SCVWD Board to **reject the staff's proposed 19.3% rate increase proposal**
2. Vote to urge the SCVWD Board to **freeze agricultural groundwater production charges unless and until there are corresponding and material reductions in the County's land use development regulations of agricultural land**

Thank you, and respectfully submitted,

Dhruv Khanna, for himself and Kirigin Cellars, one of California's oldest wineries