

**SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL
AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

SPECIAL MEETING

City/County Library Community Room
995 Palm Street
San Luis Obispo

Wednesday, July 2, 2008
1:30 p.m.

- 1. Introductions and Determination of a Quorum**
- 2. Consideration of Comments with Cover Letter on the Santa Margarita Ranch Final Environmental Impact Report**

--- Adjourn by 3:00 pm ---

Next Regular Meeting: September 3, 2008 1:30 pm
City/County Library Community Room
995 Palm Street, San Luis Obispo

Visit Water Resources on the Web at: www.slocountywater.org

Purpose of the Committee:

To advise the County Board of Supervisors concerning all policy decisions relating to the water resources of the SLO County Flood Control & Water Conservation District. To recommend to the Board specific water resource programs. To recommend methods of financing water resource programs.

Excerpts from WRAC By-Laws dated March, 6, 2007

WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE 2008

Organization	Representative	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul**	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cambria CSD	Jim Adams	M		X	X	X	X					
	Robert Reasons	A					X					
	Bob Gresens	Staff	X									
Heritage Ranch CSD	John D'Ornellas	M	X		X							
	Debbie Fransen	A										
Los Osos CSD	John Schempf	M	X		X		X					
	Steve Senet	A	X	X		X	X					
	George Milanese	Staff	X									
	Margret Falkner	Staff										
Nipomo CSD	Bruce Buel	M	X	X	•	X	X	X				
	Ed Eby	A	X	X	X		X					
Oceano CSD	Patrick O'Reilly	m	X									
	Phil Davis	A										
Templeton CSD	Paul Sorensen	M					X	X				
	Laurie Ion	A										
San Simeon CSD	John Russell*	NM										
	Charles Grace*	NA										
City of Arroyo Grande	Chuck Fellows	M		X	•	X	X					
	Jim Guthrie	A										
City of Atascadero	Steve Kahn	M										
	David Athey	A										
City of Grover Beach	Chuck Ashton	M		X	X	X	X	X				
	Bill Nicolls	A										
City of Morro Bay	Betty Winholtz	M	X	X	X	X	X	X				
	Bill Boucher	A										
City of Paso Robles	Christopher Alakel	M			•		X					
	Doug Monn	A										
	Iris Prieststaff	Staff			X							
City of Pismo Beach	Kris Vardas	M										
	Dennis Delzeit	A	X	X		X	X	X				
City of San Luis Obispo	Christine Mulholland	M	X	X	X	X	X	X				
	Alan Settle	A										
	Ron Munds	Staff										
	Gary Henderson	Staff	X	X	X	X		X				
District 1	Steve Sinton	M	X	X	X	X	X	X				
District 2	Bill Garfinkel	M	X	X	X	X	X	X				
District 3	Marilee Hyman	M	X	X	X	X	X	X				
District 4	Michael Winn	M	X	X	•	X	X	X				
District 5	Dan O'Grady	M	X	X	X	X	X	•				
Ca Mens Colony	John Kellerman	M	X	X	X	X		X				
	Gerald Elwood	A										
Camp SLO	Chris Long	M			X	•		X				
	Nicole Balliet	A				•						
Cuesta College	Edralin Maduli	M										
	Terry Reece	A			X							
Atascadero Mutual	John Neil	NM				X						
	Jaime Lien	NA			X			X				
Golden State Water	Mark Zimmer	NM			X		X	X				
	Dan Dorlack	NA										
Agriculture at Large	Ray Allen	M	X	X	X	X						
	Mike Broadhurst	A	X		X	•	X	X				
County Farm Bureau	Joy Fitzhugh	M	X	X	X	X	X	•				
	Jackie Crabb	A						X				
Environmental at Large	Sue Luft	M	X	X	X	X	X	X				
	Eric Greening	M	X	X	X	X	X	X				
	David Chipping	A	X	X	X	X		X				
	Sue Harvey	A			X							
Coastal San Luis RCD	Linda Chipping	M	X	X	X	X		X				
	Kathie Matsuyama	A										
Upper Salinas RCD	Tom Mora	M										
	Bill Bianchi	A	X	X	X	X	X	X				
	Gidi Pullen	Staff					X					
Public Works Staff	Courtney Howard	Staff	X	X	X	X		X				
	Paavo Ogren	Staff		X			X					
	Dean Benedix	Staff			X	X	X	X				
	Sylas Cranor	Staff	X	X	X	X		X				
	Glen Priddy	Staff					X					
	Mark Hutchinson	Staff						X	X			
Planning Staff	James Caruso	Staff			X		X					
	Martha Miller	Staff			X							
Parks Staff	Don Melin	Staff					X					
Env. Health Staff	Laurie Salo	Staff										
	Leslie Terry	Staff	X		X	X	X	X				
	Megan Lillich	Staff	X		X	X		X				
Ag. Com. Staff	Michael Isensee	Staff	X	X	X	X	X	X				

M= Member; A= Alternate; NM=New Member NA= New Alternate 0 = No nomination received as of 6/4/08

**Special Meeting

• = Notified of Absence/Conflict

June 27, 2008

Honorable James R. Patterson
Chairman, Board of Supervisors
County of San Luis Obispo
976 Osos Street
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408-2040

Subject:

Water Resources Advisory Committee Comments on the Water Sections of the Final Environmental Impact Report for Santa Margarita Ranch Agricultural Residential Cluster Subdivision Project and Future Development Program

Dear Chairman Patterson:

The San Luis Obispo County Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC) formed an ad hoc subcommittee to review and comment on the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for Santa Margarita Ranch Agricultural Residential Cluster Subdivision Project and Future Development Program. Previously, the WRAC also submitted comments on the DEIR and on the RDEIR. The WRAC is providing comments at this time for consideration now by the County Planning Commission and for the Board of Supervisors' consideration at a later date. At its July 2, 2008 meeting, the WRAC voted to submit this letter and the attached comments.

Overall, the WRAC believes that both the responses to the WRAC's comments and the Final EIR do not show that the proposed project/program has been sufficiently analyzed regarding water supply and impacts to water-dependent wildlife. The WRAC also finds that several aspects of the project/program, its alternatives, and mitigations are not sufficiently analyzed, and that critical data are missing.

The WRAC has been concerned that insufficient data exists to properly evaluate the ability of the water supply to meet the demands of the proposed Santa Margarita Ranch project/program. Accordingly, the WRAC recommended the preparation of a Resource Capacity Study (RCS) for the Santa Margarita area for the purpose of obtaining up-to-date baseline information from which to analyze and evaluate the proposed project/program. The FEIR admits that available groundwater data from the Ranch have not been collected over a complete hydrologic cycle and are not sufficient to determine the long-term impacts of existing and proposed groundwater pumping. Even so, the FEIR states that an RCS should be done after certification of the FEIR because no new data will result from a County staff proposed RCS that uses existing, old, incomplete data. This is not the comprehensive type of RCS recommended by the WRAC and which we believe the Board of Supervisors approved. More data must be obtained to answer those critical questions about the impacts of increased groundwater extraction on the water supply for the project/program and on the community of Santa Margarita. Without it, we are all flying blind. The needed RCS would necessarily include the monitoring and measurements required to obtain current data on water quality, consumption, well levels, stream flows, and riparian habitat. The WRAC recommends that the FEIR not be certified until this type of RCS is completed and the current baseline information it will provide has been analyzed and responded to.

Lacking essential information from the RCS, and not knowing whether the use of imported water is feasible, the WRAC believes the FEIR does not provide adequate justification for its assertion that the project/program will have significant and unavoidable Class I impacts on the water environment.

Accordingly, the WRAC believes certification of the Final EIR would be premature until the RCS is completed, the data evaluated, and the impacts on the water environment ascertained.

Another major concern is the importation of water from the State or from Nacimiento which the FEIR proposes as mitigations for the Ag Cluster. The FEIR claims the importation of water is uncertain and therefore asserts a Class I impact. This is comparable to a hypothetical FEIR for a major shopping center proposing freeway interchange improvements as a traffic mitigation while simultaneously saying it may not be feasible to make the improvements. Both examples leave critical project elements and related impacts and mitigations up in the air. The WRAC recommends the feasibility of imported water be ascertained prior to certification.

For projects exceeding 500 homes (the 112 home Ag Cluster plus the 402 home Future Development Program), State law requires certification of a reliable 20-year water supply. The WRAC believes the FEIR fails to provide adequate evidence of such a water supply. Our attached comments provide the basis for this opinion.

In summary, the WRAC believes the Final EIR is defective and should be withdrawn for corrections for the following reasons:

- Lack of sufficient data (RCS) needed for a reliable water resource baseline.
- Insufficient analyses of water resources, project/program, alternatives and mitigations.
- Adequacy of the water supply is not reasonably ascertained.
- Feasibility of imported water is not reasonably ascertained.
- Determinations of Class I impacts are unjustified by limited analysis.
- Mitigations relying on CC&R's are not enforceable by the County.

The WRAC hopes its comments will prove helpful to all parties involved in the environmental review process for this project.

Respectfully,

Michael Winn
Chairman, Water Resources Advisory Committee

Cc: SLO County Board of Supervisors w/ attachments
SLO County Planning Commission w/attachments
Bill Robeson, SLO County Planning w/attachments
Trevor Keith, SLO County Planning w/attachments

Attachment: Comments on Final EIR from WRAC ad hoc Subcommittee

COMMENTS ON FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
By
WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE FOR SANTA MARGARITA RANCH

June 27, 2008

COMMENTS ON DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT, April 4, 2007

Section 4.14 Water and Wastewater

3. Consumptive Use (pg 4.14-3): The information in the DEIR does not support the assumption that 40% of rural residential water use and 32% of agricultural water results in groundwater recharge. This analysis did not take into consideration the clay soil type and subsurface structure of the area. Since the Santa Margarita area is known for its clay soils, percolation would be reduced. If there is a clay lens strata under the surface much of the water used will not make in into the ground water basin and would come out of the ground in springs or into the numerous creeks and drainages that traverse the area. Since these assumptions are used for determining consumptive use, a further analysis would be warranted to get a more accurate calculation of recharge to determine consumptive use.

Response 8D, p. CR-59: This response fails to address agricultural return water. Neither did it address crop evapotranspiration or return flows that would be critical in the calculation of water balance. Mound systems are unlikely to be located adjacent to the irrigated areas close to homes, so the claimed compensation for low permeability soils is unlikely and therefore remains unsubstantiated.

4. Consumptive Use (pg 4.14-5): With the potential for overdraft of the ground water basins, it is critical to understand the influence of soil type and rainfall patterns in determining ground water recharge for this area. If the surface is already saturated by rainfall, little subsequent rainfall will make its way into the ground water basin because it will runoff into the creeks and flow to the Salinas River.

Response 8E, p. CR-60: This response is inadequate because well levels must be evaluated over a full hydrologic cycle (per FEIR 4.14-5), and such necessary data, while not currently available, must be obtained and will be known upon completion of the RCS and the Water Supply Assessment. Appendix K indicates that existing agricultural pumping may already be producing some local overdraft conditions and impacting stream surface and underflows.

6. Imported Water (pg 4.14-7): The DEIR requires “Imported Water Supply. The applicant shall acquire imported water supply to serve the agricultural Residential Cluster Subdivision. Potential sources include State Water and/or the Nacimiento Water Project.” Since Nacimiento water is planned to be untreated surface water and would require expensive treatment, it has not been considered as an option by the CSA 23. If State Water is used, the CSA 23 would have to purchase an entitlement from Shandon. If this were to happen, a supplemental EIR for the State Water Project must be completed. If that report has been completed it must be part of the DEIR. The economic impacts of the cooperative agreement for State Water between the proposed project and the CSA should be investigated as it may have significant impacts on local residents.

Response 8G, p. CR-60: The response fails to address the location or impacts of the water treatment plant, pump station, and pipelines necessary to handle untreated Nacimiento water whether the water is treated for domestic use or for drip irrigation. The response fails to identify and analyze the impacts of a possible arrangement between the Ranch and CSA-23. Even though an agreement has not yet been reached, various impacts should be reasonably foreseeable and therefore must be analyzed and mitigations proposed.

Appendix K Hydrogeological Study

1. An investigation of the water demands for the proposed project have been analyzed, but the DEIR should also look at the impacts the proposed project will have on the water supply for the community of Santa Margarita.

Response 8I, p. CR-60: The response acknowledges that there may be significant impacts to the shallow groundwater source and to the subsurface streamflows that supply the Santa Margarita area if the location of groundwater production for the project changes. Such unidentified impacts can be avoided by prohibiting any changes in the locations of groundwater production.

COMMENTS ON REVISED ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

By

WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE FOR SANTA MARGARITA RANCH

MARCH 5, 2008

2. **NECESSITY FOR RESOURCE CAPACITY STUDY:** County Supervisors have approved the preparation of a Resource Capacity Study for the Santa Margarita area. Such a study will yield reliable baseline information about water usage, well levels, stream conditions, and biological conditions in the area. This baseline documentation is

particularly important to determining the severity of the Class I, significant and unavoidable environmental impacts of the proposed project and must be included and analyzed in the Final EIR.

Response R-4D, p. CR-907: This response fails to include required elements: specifically current, reliable baseline information and a Water Supply Assessment that certifies a 20-year water supply is available. This response also fails to adequately describe existing hydrological conditions which can be made known by the execution of the approved RCS. This response fails to present sufficient data to justify alleged Class I impacts of both projects on water, nor does it determine the maximum safe yield of the aquifer from which it intends to draw water for the projects. The FEIR's estimate of water consumption for the 112 home Ag Cluster is 161.28 afy compared to the much larger existing and planned water consumption of 4263.18 afy (Table 4.14-2). This huge disparity demonstrates that the FEIR's assertion of a Class I impact from the 112 home Ag Cluster is unwarranted and unjustifiable. This response asserts that the RCS is not expected to generate new data which contradicts the intent of the comprehensive RCS recommended by the WRAC and approved by the Supervisors to be performed in conjunction with the Conservation Element. The WRAC anticipates that new data will be generated that are critical to making informed decisions about the proposed project/program, particularly the Future Development Program which is estimated to use about 10 times as much water as the initial Ag Cluster project. Furthermore, State law (SB 610) requires a Water Supply Assessment (WSA) be performed for projects exceeding 500 homes in order to make findings that the required 20-year water supply is certifiable. Accordingly, the RCS and the WSA must be performed prior to certification of this FEIR.

3. BASELINE DATA: The RDEIR does not contain reliable baseline data as required by CEQA. The RDEIR (Table 4.14-1), for example, **estimates** existing water demands instead of providing actual **measured** water usage. The RDEIR does not provide necessary information about the existing extensive installed water distribution system on the ranch which would yield more reliable data on how much water is extracted, where it is extracted from, and where it goes. Specifically, detailed drawings showing existing water distribution system piping, routing, pipe sizes, all connections to wells and pumps, rated pump gallons per minute, head, motor horsepower, electricity consumption, propane consumption, and irrigated areas served are requested. Also complete records for all wells including dry season well depths, observed changes in stream flows, and pumping and recharge rates during drought periods are requested. Installation of flow meters and other monitoring devices by the applicant may well be required in order to obtain baseline data (this was previously requested by the WRAC). Understanding the impacts of **existing** ranch operations on the water environment is a necessary first step to determining the impacts of the proposed project. This is a major omission by the RDEIR. There is also concern that the ranch may be extracting water from the underflow of creeks and already impacting the riparian environment. The potential for underflow extraction by the proposed project must be quantitatively addressed.

Response R-4H, p. CR-908: This response is not a good-faith effort at full disclosure because the information requested by the WRAC was not provided even though most of it such as existing pumps, piping, and routing should be available or easily obtainable. This response fails to adequately describe the existing water system. This response fails to provide an adequate impact analysis nor demonstration of justification for classifying impacts on groundwater as Class I because most of the existing water demands have been estimated by calculations instead of obtaining actual demands by measurement, and because it acknowledges the RCS would be helpful while at the same time in Response R-4D asserts the RCS is not expected to generate new data. This response fails to address the comments about impacts on creek underflows.

The FEIR contains a letter from NOAA which expresses the same concerns, specifically that complete records of water usage by existing Ranch operations plus an accurate water budget analysis must be provided. Complete water usage data must include accurate groundwater extraction records from all wells, data during drought and dry seasons, recharge rates, and streamflow data for the two watersheds providing water to the Ranch.

4. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM: Table 4.14-1 is not consistent with the narrative in either terminology or numbers. The narrative refers to “Future Development Program” but this does not appear in the Table. The table lists “Planned Orchards and Planned Vineyards” but this language does not appear in the narrative. The numbers for vineyard acreage in the Table do not match the narrative. For example, on p. 2-110 of the RDEIR, a 2000 acre vineyard expansion is mentioned, but the Table indicates planned vineyards of 1026.1 acres; p. 2-110 indicates some water usage for the Residential Cluster and the Future Development Program, but the Table does not indicate any. Several major components of Tract 2586 are missing from the Table including two wineries, a farm/ranch headquarters, a bed and breakfast, and farm worker housing. The Table also omits some of the components of the Future Development Program described on p.1-1. The Table does not show the 1466.17 ac-ft of water demand from Table 4.14-2 in the DEIR for the Future Development Program. Where are the “Planned Orchards” to be located, what type of orchards are they, and how does this correlate with the indicated water demand? This information is required by CEQA. Since there is no commitment to retire “the 402 lots allowable under the Salinas River Plan,” the potential water demands of these lots, the golf course, etc. must be addressed as part of the cumulative impacts indicated in Table 4.14-2 of the original DEIR.

Response R-4I, p. CR-908: The response is inadequate because the impacts of the related existing and Planned Orchards and Vineyards must be analyzed as part of the RCS and Water Supply Assessment in order to obtain a meaningful baseline from which to evaluate the impacts of the proposed project and program, and because the Planned Orchards and Vineyards will extract groundwater from the same aquifer as the project/program.

7. NEW ALTERNATIVES: The three new alternatives proposed for the Agricultural Residential Cluster Subdivision are not developed in sufficient detail to determine interrelationships with other proposed ranch development with respect to water and

wastewater, or to make a reasonable comparison with other alternatives that are more fully developed. Table 3-1 purports to compare alternatives, but + and – signs are no substitute for hard data which is required by CEQA.

Response R-4L, p. CR-909: This response fails to really address the comment because it does not provide the requested data and ignores the evidence presented in the comment that + and – signs are no substitute for hard data. The “No Project/Program” alternative is not analyzed. This would provide a baseline from which to evaluate the other alternatives.

8. COUNTY POLICIES: P. 2-112 proposes an imported water supply to serve the Agricultural Residential Cluster Subdivision. P. 2-116 indicates that untreated imported water from Nacimiento or from the State Water Project would be used for agriculture to offset groundwater use for the Cluster. So, imported water really would not serve the Cluster. As correctly pointed out in the RDEIR, this violates both Ag Policy 11 and its provision that groundwater be used for agriculture not housing, and the County’s Framework for Planning and its goal of maintaining a distinction between urban and rural development by not providing for rural uses from urban and village areas. The WRAC does not recommend deviating from these established county policies and is concerned that doing so would set an unfortunate precedent throughout the county.

Response R-4M, p. CR-909: This response acknowledges the option of treating raw Nacimiento water for Ag Cluster use, but the FEIR omits analysis of the requested impacts of the necessary water treatment facilities. This response fails to mention that the use of untreated water for agriculture may not be feasible because use of untreated water for vineyard irrigation is problematic due to the clogging of drip irrigation systems by contaminants. This response is also inadequate because the concerns that imported water for Ag use violates Ag Policy 11 are merely “noted.”

9. IMPORTED WATER PROPOSED AS MITIGATION: The RDEIR does not prove the feasibility of proposed mitigation W-1(c) Imported Water as required by CEQA. So imported water cannot be considered a mitigation at this time. Monitoring has also been added as a proposed mitigation. However, while monitoring of the environment and related water usage is certainly critical and must be a condition of development, monitoring by itself cannot be considered a mitigation unless it is tied to specific thresholds where mitigating actions are initiated that increase water supply and/or decrease consumption and prevent environmental degradation. On p. 2-112 it states that Santa Margarita Ranch, LLC has an allocation of Nacimiento water. However, we understand the Nacimiento Pipeline Project EIR only identifies the Ranch as a **potential participant** without an allocation and no executed agreements for water.

Response R-4N and R-4O, p. CR-910: This response fails to present the requested evidence of feasibility of imported water while still identifying imported water as a mitigation.

10. IMPACTS OF IMPORTED WATER PIPELINES: Pp. 2-114 thru 2-118 cover alternative SWP and NWP connections and routing of piping to service the proposed project. The RDEIR just describes pipe routing and connection alternatives but does not analyze the environmental impacts in sufficient detail to determine the feasibility of the proposed alternatives as required by CEQA. Instead, the RDEIR states that separate EIR's would be done for the connections. This does not conform to CEQA which requires the feasibility of all possible project alternatives to be included in one project EIR. P. 2-112 attempts to incorporate EIR's and MND's from other projects associated with State water and Nacimiento water into the RDEIR for this proposed project. We question the validity of using old EIR's and MND's on later projects because environmental conditions and criteria change over time. Additionally, the Final EIR for the Nacimiento Pipeline, on p. 7-18, warns of the negative consequences of allowing the use of pipeline water to drive speculative development and cause growth inducing, Class I impacts. Importation of Nacimiento water to the rural Santa Margarita area could have such impacts because the resulting availability of large amounts of imported water would make development much easier and more financially attractive while increasing pressure on governmental agencies to allow it.

Response R-4P, p. CR-910: This response fails to present the requested details of further development or assessment of the impacts of proposed pumping, pipe routing, and piping connections. It is reasonable to believe that a project element that requires an 8-foot wide excavation along its length such as the proposed piping would have environmental impacts. Contrary to the response, we believe CEQA does require the reasonable determination of the feasibility of all project alternatives and the assessment of their impacts. The response also fails to address the comments about growth-inducing impacts from imported water.

12. MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR IMPORTED WATER: The RDEIR indicates ranch owners would be responsible for construction, operation, maintenance and monitoring of any service connection to SWP or NWP. Who are ranch owners? The original developers? Cluster home owners? Vineyard owners? Both? CEQA requires the EIR to demonstrate the feasibility of the proposed management and administration of mitigations and having in place this structure prior to construction. For example, how will the capital and operational needs be funded? This demonstration is missing from the RDEIR.

Response R-4R, p. CR-911: The response is inadequate because it does not present any evidence of the feasibility of organizing or capitalizing the proposed Santa Margarita Ranch Water Company (SMRWC). It merely asserts that it is the designated entity for obtaining Nacimiento water and does not answer the specific questions about management, administration and funding. FEIR p. 4.14-8 states that the SMRWC is identified as an eligible agency as part of the Ag Cluster and could receive imported water. Page 4.14-11 states that imported water could be used for agriculture and/or for homes after treatment. The FEIR, however, fails to address how the SMRWC will manage this possible dual use or to identify what criteria will be used for making decisions on how the water will be used (ag, homes, or both).

13. FEASIBILITY OF IMPORTED WATER: There is no discussion of the known difficulties or feasibility of obtaining the necessary quantities of State water and Nacimiento water and the reliability of those sources during periods of drought . This information is required by CEQA. Furthermore, the underground storage capacity and ability of the aquifer to meet water demands during prolonged drought conditions is unknown and not analyzed in the RDEIR. The Resource Capacity Study is needed to ascertain this information for analysis.

Response R-4S, P. CR-911: The response is inadequate because while it acknowledges that the Santa Margarita vicinity water supply has been impacted by drought conditions, it proposes to rely on old, existing, incomplete data rather than monitoring and measuring current conditions and developing an up-to-date baseline in accordance with the WRAC's recommended RCS and required Water Supply Assessment.

15. IMPACTS OF AQUIFER DRAWDOWN ON THE COMMUNITY: P. 2-111 states that Margarita Farms is the only non-agricultural development **on the Ranch property** that draws from the same aquifer as the proposed project. This statement is misleading and beside the point because the community of Santa Margarita and other residences in the area draw water from the same aquifer. What are the impacts of the proposed project on users outside of the project boundaries like these users? This information is required by CEQA.

Response R-4U, p. CR-912: This response does not provide the requested information. Instead it merely references the FEIR section for Impact W-1 which says that there is insufficient data by which to determine the impacts on groundwater. This is yet another reason for a comprehensive RCS and Water Supply Assessment.

16. CONSUMPTIVE USE AND RECHARGE: Pp. 2-111 asserts that 40% of rural residential water use and 32% of agricultural use returns to the local aquifer. Sources and calculations for these percentages must be provided. If 40% of residential water use is assumed for interior use, it would require 100% of the interior water to make it to the septic system and into the basin – an unlikely occurrence. With respect to agricultural water, if it is applied properly, almost no basin recharge occurs because the water would not go much deeper than the root zones. Not knowing the location of the basin relative to the agricultural and residential locations precludes knowing if potential recharge water would even reach the basin. The effect of the area's clay soil which reduces recharge to the aquifer is not addressed. There is no accounting for the portion of the water use that flows to the Salinas and does not recharge the aquifer. A water balance calculation should be provided to show the whole picture and should include all of the possible uses described in the EIR. This information is required by CEQA.

Response R-4V, p. CR-912: Refer to Response 8D, p. CR-59 above.

17. IMPACTS ON STREAM FLOWS AND TROUT: The discussion of mitigations of impacts on steelhead trout on Pp. 2-74 thru 76 omits analysis of impacts on stream

flows from the project's increased water usage. Also, there is no analysis of impacts from existing operations, and baseline data is missing. This information is required by CEQA. We note that NOAA recommends no decrease in stream flows. A possible mitigation could be the plugging of all existing wells that likely extract water from the underflows of streams that historically have supported steelhead populations.

Response R-4W, p. CR-912: The response that an EIR cannot assign mitigations related to existing conditions that are not related to project impacts conflicts with the newly included letter in the FEIR from the California Department of Fish and Game which expresses concerns about existing Ranch groundwater extraction perhaps being diverted from the underflows of Trout and Rinconada Creeks and whether the Ranch has rights for such diversions. For example, Trout Creek Well No. 1 most likely is pumping the underflow because of its proximity to the creek and because of the high water level in the well. Because the proposed project/program will extract groundwater from some of the same existing wells and from the same aquifers, the impacts are related to existing conditions, and the response is therefore incorrect.