



Loma Prieta Chapter ~ San Mateo, Santa Clara & San Benito Counties

Mayor Chuck Reed
City Council Members
City of San Jose
200 East Santa Clara Street
San Jose, CA 95113

March 7, 2007

Re: Coyote Valley Water Supply Evaluation

Dear Mayor Reed and Council Members,

The Sierra Club remains a very interested stakeholder in the planning process for the proposed development of Coyote Valley. The recent release and upcoming council consideration of the Coyote Valley Specific Plan Water Supply Evaluation (WSE) offers an opportunity for all of us to carefully consider the challenges of providing a secure water supply to our communities. The Sierra Club believes strongly that water is basic to all life. Water quality and water quantity are integral to issues such as energy, land use, and maintenance of a healthy environment for plants, wildlife and humanity. Proper management of water is essential so that present and future generations may survive and flourish.

While water demand for the proposed project in Coyote Valley does not represent a significant portion of the overall water demand projected by the Santa Clara Valley Water District, providing it will be complex and expensive. The WSE notes several challenges the most important of which is meeting California Department of Health Services standards for groundwater recharge in the Coyote Sub-basin. The goal of maximizing the use of recycled water to meet non-potable demand is laudable and consistent with Sierra Club policy. It is therefore critical that the council and the public fully understand the means by which recycled water will be treated to ensure that it meets state standards and who will bear the cost of meeting these standards (as well as the cost of distribution).

Using up to 10,500 acre feet/year of recycled water in the Coyote Sub-basin for groundwater recharge may not be an option due to hydrological constraints. A suggested alternative is to recharge with recycled water in the Santa Clara Sub-basin and transfer water from this sub-basin to the Coyote Sub-basin for recharge. Moving water between sub-basins may be a reasonable strategy but it is imperative that communities dependent on the Santa Clara sub-basin not be put in jeopardy. Furthermore, environmental impacts

for each strategy considered should be carefully studied to ensure that human health and environmental quality are not put at risk.

As the city of San Jose considers the Coyote Valley Specific Plan it should be cognizant of future water demand from other large projects such as the North First Street redevelopment. In all cases the most effective solution is to make a strong commitment to the use of best conservation practices and technologies.

The city of San Jose is a signatory to the Mayors Climate Protection Agreement demonstrating a commitment to address the global climate crisis we all face. The advanced treatment of recycled water and reliance on pump stations is energy intensive. In addition, current climate models predict the Sierra snowpack will become less reliable in future years requiring communities to be more dependent on local supplies and technology. The projected build-out period of 20-30 years for the CVSP will occur in a new, dryer climate so it is critical to carefully weigh the choices made today for future growth. The Sierra Club does not want to see San Jose miss an opportunity to provide a secure future for generations to come.

Thank you for you consideration of our comments.

Melissa Hippard
Chapter Director

Cc: SCVWD Board of Directors