



City of Sebastopol

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Rec.
9/13/04
CWS

September 7, 2004

Judge Allan Hardcastle
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
Hall of Justice
600 Administration Drive
Santa Rosa, California 95403

#1892
SEP 28 RECD

Re: Response to Recommendations R-1 and R-2, 2003-04 Sonoma County Grand Jury Final Report Regarding Groundwater Resources

This letter is in response to the recommendations contained in the 2003-04 Sonoma County Grand Jury Final Report with regard to groundwater resources in the County.

As noted in the Draft Water Resources Element (WRE) of the County's General Plan 2020, public concerns are increasing over depletion of groundwater in many areas of the County, "...but limited factual data about existing groundwater levels and use is currently available upon which to fully assess the problem or to formulate a comprehensive management strategy." It is clear that such data is needed in order to assess the availability of water in the County's major groundwater basins. Water is a critical public resource, and just as the County (including its cities) has grown and developed, so has concern among water providers and the public about how continued growth and development will affect the adequacy and quality of our water supplies in years to come. As a purveyor of water to the residents of the City of Sebastopol, and as a neighbor of the unincorporated areas that surround us, the City shares these concerns.

The City of Sebastopol is required to respond to:

Recommendation R1- "The County and each of its cities should adopt or amend a sustainable water element as part of their general plan with a target date of January 1, 2005, the adoption date of the next general plan."

With regard to Recommendation R1, the City's General Plan, adopted in 1994, contains includes various goals and policies designed to ensure water supply and water quality reliability for our Municipal water customers.

Early in 2004, the City began the process of updating our Water Master Plan, in order to assess both the condition and adequacy of our municipal water system to provide for projected growth

in the future.

In 1999, the City completed a Drinking Water Source Assessment and Protection Program, and will be developing a Wellhead Protection Ordinance in the near future. In addition, in our annual Planning Update, the City regularly assesses water usage and future demand based on projected growth. The City continuously monitors water usage, groundwater levels and water quality in all our wells.

Sebastopol also has various water conservation policies and programs in place, including requirements for all new construction to use extra-low-flow fixtures, a rebate program for residents who replace old fixtures with low-flow equipment, low water usage guidelines for landscaping, and an ongoing leak detection and water meter replacement program. Sebastopol also uses reclaimed wastewater from the Santa Rosa Subregional Water Reclamation System for irrigation of our Laguna Youth Park and Little League Fields, when it is available, in order to conserve potable water. In March 2004, the City co-hosted a Sebastopol Water Forum, whose participants included local elected officials and representatives of the State Dept. of Water Resources, Regional Water Quality Control Board, the City and local citizens' groups to discuss concerns related to groundwater supply and water quality in the region.

Recommendation R2 – “The County and each of its cities should adopt and develop a comprehensive groundwater management plan such as that set forth in AB 3030. The information from the existing groundwater studies should be used to provide a bank of information upon which to initiate a groundwater management plan.”

The City of Sebastopol agrees that a comprehensive, County-wide groundwater management program should be developed. In order to gather data needed to better define and assess our groundwater source itself, the City has committed to participation in the Santa Rosa Plain Basin-wide Groundwater Study, along with the Sonoma County Water Agency and the cities of Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park, Cotati and Windsor. City representatives will also provide technical support to the USGS during the basin study by providing data related to our own water systems, construction of wells, usage, water levels and other records we maintain. This study is due to commence within the next few months, pending approval of the co-funding agreement between the various jurisdictions. Information provided by this study will provide the basis for the development and implementation of a comprehensive groundwater management plan.

Respectfully submitted,



Linda Kelley
Mayor

c: Board of Supervisors
Council Members
City Manager
Planning Director
Engineering Director