



Santa Cruz County Business Council

April 25, 2014

President LaHue and Directors,

The Santa Cruz County Business Council (SCCBC) urges you to reconsider your decision to cease the issuance of conditional and unconditional will serve letters, particularly for projects already in process. This policy essentially constitutes a de facto moratorium on projects that would reduce the overall amount of water being pumped within the Soquel Creek Water District (SCWD). With respect to one project in particular, Twin Lakes Church, your temporary ban causes SCWD to miss out on supporting a development that will not only exceed the current standards of your Water Demand Offset (WDO) program, but one that will also present you with a great opportunity for community engagement and education, due to the vast number of Twin Lakes parishioners that live and work within SCWD boundaries.

The rationale behind your ceasing to grant will serve letters is based upon an assumption that a moratorium is necessary and imminent. While we debate the merits of a temporary halt on conditional/unconditional assurances, the bigger question pertains to whether a moratorium is truly the most effective strategy moving forward. Will it benefit SCWD, or would the impact be nominal? Based upon information provided by your staff, we understand that during the past 10 years new developments have accounted for only 12 additional acre feet of water per year. Compared to SCWD's approximate pumping level of 4,400 acre feet, this amount is equivalent to less than .3 percent of the total amount of water being used annually. Given this data, we feel that the impact would be nominal, thus other steps should be considered to achieve the pumping reduction goals that have been set. One option might be further study about per person daily consumption limits allotted through your soon to be implemented rationing program. That said, we feel that consideration of the economic and social impacts to our community is critical in the evaluation of any future steps taken by SCWD.

While not supportive of recent and potential actions related to a moratorium, SCCBC understands the need to reduce the amount of water being pumped and the shared sacrifices required to do so. However, we also believe that certain developments, especially those like the Twin Lakes School Project, represent a valuable opportunity to engage a broad cross-section of community stakeholders to work alongside you and your staff in cultivating community buy-in for solutions that will have lasting impact.

Sincerely,

Joe Foster
Executive Director