



To: Frank Mecham/BOS/COSLO@Wings, Bruce Gibson/BOS/COSLO@Wings, Adam Hill/BOS/COSLO@Wings, Paul Teixeira/BOS/COSLO@Wings, Debbie Arnold/BOS/COSLO@Wings, Vicki Shelby/BOS/COSLO@Wings, Cherie cr_board_clerk Clerk Recorder/ClerkRec/COSLO@Wings,
Cc:
Bcc:
Subject: Fw: Paso Robles Groundwater Basin concerns
From: Board of Supervisors/BOS/COSLO - Monday 04/29/2013 09:45 AM
Sent by: Fran Zohns/BOS/COSLO

----- Forwarded by Fran Zohns/BOS/COSLO on 04/29/2013 09:45 AM -----

From: Jan Seals <jan_seals@sbcglobal.net>
To: boardofsups@co.slo.ca.us
Date: 04/27/2013 07:43 AM
Subject: Paso Robles Groundwater Basin concerns

To the Honorable SLO County Board of Supervisors:

We are sending this email because we will be out of town and unable to attend the Board of Supervisors' meeting on May 7th.

We have owned and lived on 2 acres in the Geneseo area for 10 years. We love our life here, but feel it is now in jeopardy from the declining water supply. Off and on our well has sucked sand. Last year the well pump burned out, and the new one was lowered as far as possible. The standard for drilling new wells in our area now is to try to go to 700 feet, however often the well starts to collapse before they can reach that depth. A neighbor's well is so slow to recover that she can no longer water her plants. As a single mother, she cannot afford the \$30,000+ to drill a new well. We moved here thinking it was our version of Eden for the rest of our lives. If our well runs dry, we don't know if we will be able to live here.

We have seen the studies that show the water level in our groundwater basin has been in decline for the last 30 years, seriously so for the last 20. It has been in overdraft for at least 10 years. Yet more and more vineyards are being planted, and it seems little or nothing is being done to stop the overdraft. Our only option for water is our well. We have the same water rights as big Ag, yet it appears that he who has the longest straw will win. And when there is no more water left, big Ag will move on to another money making venture.

What will happen to the local economy when home owners are forced to leave because they have no water and thus their land has no value? What will happen to the local economy when there is either no more water for the vineyards, or it is so saline or so heavy with boron. that it cannot be used for irrigation? This lovely wine region and its economy will wither and die, along with the vines that no longer have water for irrigation.

Pretending the problem does not exist will not make it go away. Please do your jobs and declare the basin in overdraft. Please accept the recommendation of the Blue Ribbon Committee to form a Water Management District. Time is of the essence. The groundwater basin needs to be managed, a plan needs to be made now. Hopefully it is not too late.

Sincerely, Gary and Jan Seals

ITEM NO. 21 MEETING DATE: MAY 7, 2013
PRESENTED BY: GARY AND JAN SEALS
REC'D PRIOR TO MEETING & POSTED ON: MAY 3, 2013



Fw: Santa Margarita/ highway 58 quarry

Board of Supervisors to: Frank Mecham, Bruce Gibson, Adam Hill, Paul Teixeira, Debbie Arnold, Vicki Shelby, Cherie Aispuro, Hannah Miller,

04/30/2013 09:56 AM

Sent by: **Fran Zohns**
Cc: cr_board_clerk Clerk Recorder

From: Board of Supervisors/BOS/COSLO
To: Frank Mecham/BOS/COSLO@Wings, Bruce Gibson/BOS/COSLO@Wings, Adam Hill/BOS/COSLO@Wings, Paul Teixeira/BOS/COSLO@Wings, Debbie Arnold/BOS/COSLO@Wings, Vicki Shelby/BOS/COSLO@Wings, Cherie
Cc: cr_board_clerk Clerk Recorder/ClerkRec/COSLO@Wings
Sent by: Fran Zohns/BOS/COSLO

----- Forwarded by Fran Zohns/BOS/COSLO on 04/30/2013 09:56 AM -----

From: Tish Keely <tishkeely@yahoo.com>
To: "boardofsups@co.slo.ca.us" <boardofsups@co.slo.ca.us>
Date: 04/30/2013 09:56 AM
Subject: Fwd: Santa Margarita/ highway 58 quarry

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: Tish Keely <tishkeely@yahoo.com>
Date: April 29, 2013, 1:51:48 PM PDT
To: "darnold@co.slo.ca.us" <darnold@co.slo.ca.us>
Subject: Santa Margarita/ highway 58 quarry

Please consider this my formal submission of a request to deny the above project. While I normally support and sympathize with any private property owners right to utilize their property to its fullest potential, this particular project impacts my property rights in a far too negative manner.

Water is already a crucial issue in this area. As a private well water consumer, I already take every possible opportunity to limit my uses of this scarce and vital resource and there is simply no way to justify using the amount of water this project will require, even at its most minimal estimates.

Secondly, air quality is already becoming a critical issue for San Luis Obispo County, due to the increase in population and resulting traffic issues. Blasting and mining operations are NOT technically so advanced as to prevent an major increase in pollution and a serious potential health hazard to the general population in lung diseases and discomfort.

Finally (but certainly not the last issue) the increase in heavy truck traffic along an already hazardous two lane country road, passing an elementary school and crossing active and busy railroad tracks, is certainly a serious negative impact on every local resident.

Please vote NO on this project to protect the interests of the majority of your constituents and not just a few special interests. Growth is not always a benefit to a society.

Thank you.

Tish Keely
Sent from my iPad



Fw: Item 21 for Board of Supervisors Hearing of May 7, 2013

Frank Mecham, Bruce Gibson, Adam

Board of Supervisors to: Hill, Paul Teixeira, Debbie Arnold, Vicki
Shelby, Cherie Aispuro, Hannah Miller,

05/02/2013 09:57 AM

Sent by: **Fran Zohns**

Cc: cr_board_clerk Clerk Recorder

----- Forwarded by Fran Zohns/BOS/COSLO on 05/02/2013 09:57 AM -----

From: John Bergen <jayridleyb@gmail.com>
To: boardofsups@co.slo.ca.us
Date: 05/01/2013 04:55 PM
Subject: Item 21 for Board of Supervisors Hearing of May 7, 2013

Dear Board Members:

My wife and I purchased our home at 775 Spring Creek Way, Templeton in November, 2004. At the time of purchase we were not aware of - and were not made aware of - any potential decline in well water availability. Our records show that at that time the Standing Water Level of our well was 145 ft. Our most recent reading by the Miller Co. in Templeton indicates that our current Standing Water Level is 225' 3". The new pump we had installed in October of 2011 by The Farm Supply Co. is functioning at 278 ft.; so there does not appear to be much leeway, given the current rate of water basin decline, before we are confronted with the need to dig a new well.

We have learned from our neighbors and friends in the area, from news articles in The Tribune, the Santa Lucian, and other publications, and from information provided by Pro Water Equity that many property owners have confronted similar or worse situations with respect to their water supply. In addition, we have become alarmed by the extensive new vineyards that have recently been planted in our vicinity, which will clearly impose a heavy demand on the area's water reserves. In view of the widespread difficulties with water that area residents are confronting and the firm statistical evidence of a marked decline in the water basin, there is clearly a compelling and urgent need to establish a groundwater management district that will result in equitable water distribution and the preservation of property values in the North County.

Therefore, we strongly support the recommendations of Pro Water Equity and urge the Board of Supervisors to take immediate action to implement the necessary assessment, oversight and regulation. By doing so you will ensure the future of this region for homeowners, farmers, ranchers, and local orchard and vineyard owners. A failure to act in a timely fashion will most certainly lead to a marked decline, not just in the water basin, but in the essential health and viability of San Luis Obispo County.

Sincerely,

John R. Bergen



Fw: Agricultural Pond Approval

Frank Mecham, Bruce Gibson, Adam Hill, Paul
Fran Zohns to: Teixeira, Debbie Arnold, Vicki Shelby, Cherie
Aispuro, Hannah Miller, Debbie Geaslen,
Cc: cr_board_clerk Clerk Recorder

05/02/2013 09:56 AM

FYI

Fran Zohns
Board of Supervisors
San Luis Obispo County
(805)781-5450

----- Forwarded by Fran Zohns/BOS/COSLO on 05/02/2013 09:55 AM -----

From: "Sheila Lyons" <salyons@airspeedwireless.net>
To: <ecarroll@co.slo.ca.us>
Cc: <mconger@co.slo.ca.us>, "Laura Kelsay Edwards" <laura@us-ltrcd.org>, <kelly@us-ltrcd.org>, <ahill@co.slo.ca.us>, <bgibson@co.slo.ca.us>, <fmecham@co.slo.ca.us>, <pteixeira@co.slo.ca.us>, "Darnold@Co. Slo. Ca. Us" <darnold@co.slo.ca.us>, "Fran" <fzohns@co.slo.ca.us>
Date: 05/01/2013 04:53 PM
Subject: Agricultural Pond Approval

Ellen,

Please find enclosed a letter from the Creston Advisory Body concerning the building of agricultural ponds over the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin.

Since our CAB meeting in April the Justin ag ponds along Creston Road have begun filling. It has been noted by several locals who see these ponds as they drive past, that there has been evidence of leakage and that there are people scrambling with sand bags to try to stop the leaks. Workers have also been seen with what looks like plastic lining. This brings into question the engineering of these ponds and whether there is any follow up inspections (see Item #7 in our letter) to see that the ponds have been built according to specs.

Sheila Lyons
CAB Chairperson



CAB on Pond approval process.doc

Creston Advisory Body



Chairperson: Sheila Lyons Ph. (805) 239-0917, P. O. Box 174 Creston, CA 93432 salyons@airspeedwireless.net

April 23, 2013

Ellen Carroll
Environmental Coordinator
Department of Planning & Building
976 Osos St., Room 300
San Luis Obispo, California 93408-2040

Dear Ms. Carroll,

The Creston Advisory Body (CAB) met on April 17, 2013 at the Creston Community Church for a regularly scheduled meeting. One topic of discussion was the process by which agricultural ponds lying over the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin are approved for construction. This topic was raised during our March meeting at the prompting of many local citizens asking about the ponds we all see along Creston Road as we drive into Paso Robles. How did these ponds get approved? Michael Conger from the Planning and Building Department (P & B Dept) was present at our April meeting, as well as Laura Edwards and Kelly Gleason from the Resources Conservation District (RCD) offices. Supervisor Debbie Arnold was also present. These representatives were very helpful in explaining how the Creston Rd (Justin) ponds were approved and how the Alternative Review Process operates.

The following questions and comments expressing concerns regarding the approval of these ponds were delivered by CAB members and members of the public. The questions (Q:) were answered (A:) by several of the individuals present.

1. Q: When does a pond become a lake? The ponds on Creston Road are large enough to water ski on. A: Unknown.
2. Q: How big are the two ponds on Creston Rd? A: Together they are 59 AF. Q: How often can they refill these ponds during the year? A: The only limiting factor on how much water can be pumped into these ponds is the capacity of the on site wells. There is no regulated limit and no monitoring process.
3. Q: Can the water in these ponds be used for both irrigation and frost protection? A: Yes.
4. Q: What is the process for approval of an application for an Ag pond? A: Applications are submitted to the County P & B Dept. P & B Dept sends requests to the Agricultural (Ag) Commissioner. If the Ag Commissioner has no problems with an application then it may be sent on to the RCD for further processing. The Alternative Review Process conducted by the RCD is faster and less expensive for agriculturalists. It was thought that farmers would be the best judges of how to use their water resources. The process was set up to serve small farmers, not the current corporate mega vineyards that have moved into the area. Ag ponds smaller than 1 AF do not require extensive review.
5. Q: In light of the current Severity Level III over the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin, how was it possible that the county stated that these ponds would have "No Significant Impact?" A: The review process primarily looks to see if there is an environmental impact. Projects deemed as agricultural in nature are assessed with less strict criteria than other types of projects. The County sends Ag pond projects to the County Ag Commissioner. If the Ag Commissioner okays the projects then they move on in the process.
6. Q: Does the process for evaluating applications for the construction of an Ag Pond consider the size of these ponds and the impact they would have on the other overlying users of the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin? A: Not directly. The criteria for approval of the ponds focuses more on the environmental impact.
7. Q: Are there any inspections of the completed ponds by the County or the RCD to check whether the ponds have been built according to specifications? A: No. There is no monitoring. CAB members were surprised by this revelation.

ITEM NO. 21 MEETING DATE: MAY 7, 2013
PRESENTED BY: SHEILA LYONS
REC'D PRIOR TO MEETING & POSTED ON: MAY 3, 2013

8. Q: Who decides the threshold Acre Feet (AF) number that determines whether a pond would have a "significant impact?" A: There is no AF number now. This is being discussed because it has become an issue. It isn't clear who would make this determination.
9. Evaporation from these ponds must be significant. Maybe the ponds should have a requirement that they be covered.
10. Q: Can the review process for Ag ponds be changed? A: The ARP process is currently being revised with input from RCD and the County. If the public wants to have input they should send their comments to the Environmental Coordinator.
11. Q: So the responsibility for approval of the ponds can be attributed to the Ag Commissioner? A: Well..... Then: The Ag Liaison and the Farm Bureau agreed to the regulations for Ag ponds that were instituted in 2010. Again, this was done with everyone thinking that the process was intended for smaller agricultural operations.
12. Q: Are there more pond applications in the works? A: There are at least four more Ag ponds currently under consideration, totaling 184 AF. These projects are on hold at the moment.

It is with these thoughts in mind that the CAB voted unanimously to recommend that the County revise the criteria for approval of agricultural ponds. The Paso Robles Groundwater Basin is at a Severity Level III and a review of the most recent PR Groundwater Basin Update (2012) indicates that it is in overdraft. The County has a responsibility to all over-lying users of the PR Groundwater Basin to ensure that their water rights are protected, not just the rights of mega-agriculturalists.

We request the County immediately develop and institute criteria that would regulate approval of agricultural ponds that by the nature of their size and scope, further jeopardize the long-term stability of the groundwater basin.

Sincerely,

Sheila Lyons
CAB Chairperson

cc: Frank Mecham, 1st District Supervisor
Bruce Gibson, 2nd District Supervisor
Adam Hill, 3rd District Supervisor
Paul Teixeira, 4th District Supervisor
Debbie Arnold, 5th District Supervisor
Michael Conger, SLO Planning and Building Department
Laura Edwards, Resource Conservation District
Kelly Gleason, Resource Conservation District



Fw: CAB letter to the B of Supervisors for May 7th Meeting

Frank Mecham, Bruce Gibson, Adam Hill, Paul
Fran Zohns to: Teixeira, Debbie Arnold, Vicki Shelby, Cherie
Aispuro, Hannah Miller, Debbie Geaslen,
Cc: cr_board_clerk Clerk Recorder

05/02/2013 09:42 AM

FYI

Fran Zohns
Board of Supervisors
San Luis Obispo County
(805)781-5450

----- Forwarded by Fran Zohns/BOS/COSLO on 05/02/2013 09:42 AM -----

From: "Sheila Lyons" <salyons@airspeedwireless.net>
To: <ahill@co.slo.ca.us>, <bgibson@co.slo.ca.us>, <fmecham@co.slo.ca.us>, <pteixeira@co.slo.ca.us>, "Darnold@Co. Slo. Ca. Us" <darnold@co.slo.ca.us>, "Fran" <fzohns@co.slo.ca.us>
Cc: <choward@co.slo.ca.us>, "Larry Werner" <lwerner@northcoastengineering.com>
Date: 05/01/2013 04:37 PM
Subject: CAB letter to the B of Supervisors for May 7th Meeting

Hello Susan,

Please distribute the enclosed letter to each of the San Luis Obispo Supervisors. This letter is from the Creston Advisory Body and relates to Agenda Item #21 for the May 7th Board of Supervisor's Meeting. Item #21 is the Paso Robles Groundwater Management Plan Implementation Update. Please be sure it becomes part of the official record for this agenda item.

Thank you,

Sheila Lyons



CAB Chairperson CAB on Water Solutions 4-13.doc

Creston Advisory Body



Chairperson: Sheila Lyons Ph. (805) 239-0917, P. O. Box 174 Creston, CA 93432 salyons@airspeedwireless.net

April 23, 2013

San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors
County Government Center
San Luis Obispo, California 93408

RE: May 7th, SLO Board of Supervisors Meeting, Agenda Item #21, Paso Robles Groundwater Management Plan Implementation Update

Dear Supervisors,

The Creston Advisory Body (CAB) met on April 17, 2013 at the Creston Community Church for a regularly scheduled meeting. One of the most important topics of discussion was the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (Basin). Creston residents are united in their concern over the looming water crisis. It is our understanding that the County has declared the PR Groundwater Basin is at a Severity Level III. A review of the latest PR Groundwater Basin Update (2012) presents the latest data indicating that the Basin is essentially in overdraft. After a very lively discussion on how the huge (59AF) Ag ponds along Creston Road that lie over the Basin got approved by the county, we then reviewed the four lists of "Solutions" put forth by the PR Groundwater Basin Blue Ribbon Solutions Sub-Committee. We first reviewed some statistics on the Basin: which subareas of the basin are most impacted; who are the main water pumpers; how much time do we have; and how the economy of the County might be impacted. Our major focus was on how the proposed solutions would benefit small local family owned growers and rural residents such as ourselves.

The following comments were delivered by CAB members and members of the public.

1. A majority of the solutions focus on the cities and leave rural residents out of the picture. Many of the solutions lack specificity and are hard to assess.
2. The solutions that propose bringing in supplemental water are far into the future, at least a decade away, are extremely expensive and do not include infrastructure to get water to rural residential homes and small vineyards such as those in Creston. Long term solutions need to remain on the table because with continued growth in the county we will need more water in the future. However, there are rural residential wells beginning to go dry now. One local water hauler delivered five loads of water in the month of December, something he has never had to do before.
3. There were questions regarding the County's authority to implement some of the proposed solutions. It was stated that the County has a responsibility to protect the "health & safety" of the public. Ensuring the availability of water is essential.
4. According to County water reports the Basin covers 505,000 acres. The three most impacted sub-areas of the Basin (Estrella, Creston & Shandon) cover close to half (216,000 acres) of the Basin and are made up primarily of rural residents and vineyards. The vineyards (29,000 acres) are consuming over 67% of the total pumped water but cover only 5% of the acreage over the Basin. There are 8000 more acres of large coporate vineyards being planted over the basin as we speak. The number of additional acres that could go into grapes is uncertain but known to be very large.
5. Using a method from the 2006 Todd report, calculations of the loss of AF storage in the basin show that we are losing over 5000 AF/year, before pumping by the new vineyard plantings are

ITEM NO. 21 MEETING DATE: MAY 7, 2013
PRESENTED BY: SHEILA LYONS
REC'D PRIOR TO MEETING & POSTED ON: MAY 3, 2013

taken into account. We are exceeding our annual Yield of 97,700 by more than 5000 AF/year. Increased pumping will make the overdraft even worse.

6. It was suggested that the cities could take more of the Naci water. However, responses included the comment that it isn't fair to put the financial burden for watering the vineyards on the people who live in the cities.
7. Many questions were posed about the potential economic impact as we considered the proposed solutions. What is the source of revenue to the county from vineyards and wineries other than property taxes? Are vineyard properties taxed higher? What about Williamson Act properties? Are there any other tax exemptions? If grapes are grown here but processed out of the county does the county collect any revenue such as sales taxes? How many local residents are employed in the wine industry? Would local workers lose jobs if vineyards were required to conserve water? Is there an economic benefit to the County to encourage the production of high quality rather than high tonnage grape crops?
8. Immediate steps must be taken to ensure water is available to residents and small vineyards in the short term and to allow the aquifer to be replenished. A management structure that ensures fair and equitable water allowances is essential to protect rural residents. Rural residents need to have a strong presence in any basin-wide management structure which determines how water is to be allocated over the Basin.

Our elected CAB representatives think that many of the questions posed at our meeting such as the County's authority in managing Basin pumping, and understanding the impact the vineyards/wineries are having on our local economy (revenues versus gross pumping) are extremely important and need to be answered. The answers need to be made available to the public.

The CAB representatives voted unanimously to recommend that the County implement steps immediately, such as implementing appropriate "Urgent Moratoriums" and establishing a basin-wide management structure, to stem the run away increase in pumping from the basin. Management of the basin can protect everyone's water rights and keep our local economy safe.

Sincerely,
Sheila Lyons
CAB Chairperson

Cc: Courtney Howard, Water Resources Engineer, SLO County Public Works Department
Larry Werner, Chairperson PR Groundwater Basin Management Blue Ribbon Committee