



## Sonoma County Water Coalition

404 A Mendocino Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95404  
707-575-5594

Citizens Advisory Committee  
c/o PRMD  
2550 Ventura Avenue  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

November 9, 2004

Dear Committee Members;

We are writing on behalf of the 23 organizations participating in the Sonoma County Water Coalition (SCWC), representing more than 21,000 people.

We wish to bring to your attention four inconsistencies in the draft General Plan considered at your meeting on Thursday, October 28.

1. Water Resource Element Implementation Programs do not include the development of programs to protect groundwater recharge areas or to slow the increase of impervious surfaces. This may be remedied by inserting two new Implementation Programs:

### **Water Resources Program: Impervious Surfaces Reduction**

**Program Description:** Establish requirements for new construction to halt loss of groundwater recharge capacity of aquifers caused by construction that increases impervious surfaces. Proactive measures are required to reduce negative impacts of impervious surfaces and encourage land use practices that increase natural groundwater recharge. These requirements shall be incorporated in appropriate construction standards including without limitation building codes administered by the Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department. (Policy reference: WR-1c-2).

### **Water Resources Program: Recharge Area Protection**

**Program Description:** Include in the mandate of the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District the acquisition and enhancement of designated groundwater recharge areas. (Policy reference: Objective WR-1.4).

2. The Flood Hazard section of the Public Safety Element fails to mention that storm water is a valuable resource as stated in Water Resource Element Objective WR-1.6. This may be remedied by inserting a new sentence into the second section of Preamble 3.2 'Flood Prevention and Control' as follows:

If storm water can be slowed and allowed to percolate into the ground, run-off to creeks can be minimized, thus reducing the severity of flooding. Storm water may then increase

**Members:** O.W.L. Foundation \* SWiG (Sebastopol Water information Group) \* Coalition for Unincorporated Sonoma County \* Valley of the Moon Alliance \* Atascadero/Green Valley Creek Watershed Council \* Community Clean Water Institute \*  
**Supporting Organizations:** \* Sierra Club (Sonoma County Group) \* Occidental Arts and Ecology \* Action Against the Casino \* Coast Action Group \* Forest Unlimited \* Friends of the Eel River \* Friends of the Gualala River \* Blucher Creek Watershed Council \* Coalition for a Better Sonoma County \* Madrone Audubon Society \* Mark West Watershed Alliance \* Russian River Chamber of Commerce \* Russian River No Low Flow Committee \* Sonoma County Conservation Action \* Forestville Citizens for Sensible Growth \* Coastal Forest Alliance \* Western Sonoma County Rural Alliance \*

groundwater recharge and be recognized as a valuable resource instead of simply a hazard.

3. The Agricultural Resources Element fails to mention the value of keeping land in agricultural production to maintain groundwater recharge areas. This may be remedied by adding a new sentence to Preamble 1.2 'Relationship to Other Element' as follows:

Keeping land in agricultural use can provide significant support to Water Resource Element objectives of minimizing impervious surfaces and thus protecting groundwater recharge areas.

4. The Land Use Element fails to mention the need to protect groundwater recharge areas. This may be remedied by adding a new Objective LU-8.6 (repeating part of Objective WR-1.4) as follows:

Objective WR-8.6: Protect existing groundwater recharge areas.

And by adding a phrase to Policy LU-8f as follows:

Policy LU-8f: Increase the role of water conservation and storm water retention for water supply purposes and protect existing groundwater recharge areas.

These changes will remedy the inconsistencies mentioned on our behalf by H.R. Downs at your meeting on October 28 2004.

As mentioned in the Sonoma County Water Coalition letter to you dated October 5, 2004, stronger policies are needed in the new Water Resource Element in order to respond to the deepening water crisis in Sonoma County. Our letter included language that would meet this need. Our primary concerns are:

- a. The need for groundwater management planning now;
- b. The need for greater protection of groundwater recharge areas;
- c. The need for much tighter control of water exports from Sonoma County.

These and other issues were addressed in the marked up copy of the Water Resource Element submitted by the Water Coalition to you on October 5, 2004.

We will bring these issues to the attention of the Planning Commission in due course.

Sincerely,

(submitted electronically to Scott Briggs)

Veronica Jacobi & Stephen Fuller-Rowell  
Co-Founders  
Sonoma County Water Coalition