

Statement: Water Resilience Portfolio Initiative
Sheryl Hamlin, Santa Paula, California
August 27, 2019

Call to Action

From a State of California website, there is a call for community input as stated in the call to action: Help Shape California’s Water Future (<http://waterresilience.ca.gov/>)

Point number four in the **Water Resilience** postcard says the following:

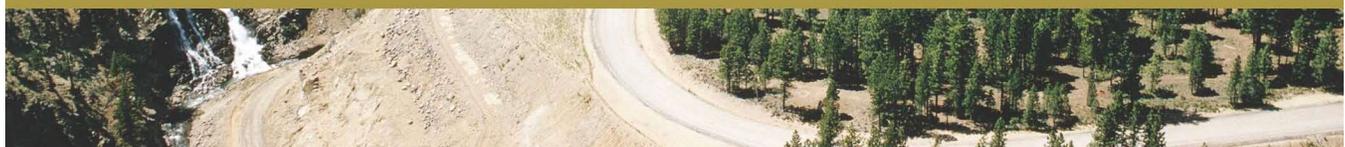
“How can state government align itself to better support the local governments that do most of the work of providing water and wastewater services?”



A few things to consider:

- » How can California take better advantage of the ways wetlands, forests, floodplains, and other natural infrastructure help clean water, recharge aquifers, dampen floods, and provide other services?
- » What are some ways to overcome the barriers that keep governments from working together for the greater good along the waterways they share?
- » What can the state do now to better protect fish and wildlife in the next inevitable drought?
- » How can state government align itself to better support the local governments that do most of the work of providing water and wastewater services?

Email your ideas to input@waterresilience.ca.gov.



Santa Paula Wastewater Plant – 15 Years of Passive Government

The example of Santa Paula’s wastewater plant will be used to illustrate how state government has been a passive observer for the past fifteen years.

Statement: Water Resilience Portfolio Initiative

Sheryl Hamlin, Santa Paula, California

August 27, 2019

History: 2004 to 2019

2004: Santa Paula issues a CEQA report in preparation for a new wastewater plant. In this CEQA report, the city specifically says that chlorides will be address in a separate CEQA.

2005: Santa Paula issues a Water Master Plan which includes a city wide municipal water softening plant using membrane technology. There was never another mention of this city wide plan in any city documents.

2006: Santa Paula holds meetings about the proposed new plant. Citizens explain that without chloride mitigation all agriculture around the plant is at risk.

2007: Santa Paula issues RFP/RFP with no mention of chloride mitigation.

2010: Santa Paula's new plant goes on-line with no chloride mitigation. Within the next few years, residents complain of dying agriculture.

2015: Santa Paula commences a water softener buyback program.

2018: First lawsuit for damaged agriculture

2019: Santa Paula submits report indicating that a pipe from the water treatment plant to Limoneira's western fields will solve the chloride problem. Public Works department, when questioned, says the solution is only "conceptual" and requests \$1.5 million to prove/disprove the plan

2019: Santa Paula council considers rate increases for water and sewer with no capital plan to fund chloride mitigation: <https://www.citizensjournal.us/santa-paula-council-narrows-rate-increase-options-to-two-alternatives/>

2019: Water Board finds that effluent could "potentially flow to the south". Why did this take ten years to discover? Source: April 22, 2019 Letter to Santa Paula From Water Board.

2019: Water Board discovers that water samples do not reflect long term impact of chloride discharged to the percolation ponds. Why did this take ten years to discover? Source: April 22, 2019 Letter to Santa Paula From Water Board.

Please refer to this article for history details: <https://www.citizensjournal.us/santa-paula-wastewater-15-years-of-compliance-inaction/>

Statement: Water Resilience Portfolio Initiative
Sheryl Hamlin, Santa Paula, California
August 27, 2019

Questions and Issues Raised from History

The obvious questions looking back at the past fifteen years are the following:

- Why did the Water Board accept a CEQA with only a vague reference to a future CEQA for chloride compliance in 2004?
- Could the city wide water softening plant have been the second plan mentioned in the 2004 CEQA?
- Was the Water Board aware of the city wide water softening plan?
- Was the Water Board aware that the RFP/RFQ did not include chloride mitigation?
- Was the Water Board aware that the plan's effluent would have damaging effects on adjacent agriculture?
- Why has the Water Board failed to see the impotence of the water softener buyback program?
- Why did the Water Board accept the proposed pipeline solution without a proof of concept?

Calculated Delay

It is clear that the last fifteen years has been a nuanced game of "calculated delay". Santa Paula does not have nor will have the capital or the vision to solve the chlorides, but if it looks busy, that will satisfy some regulator somewhere.

With various personnel changes in both the city and the Water Board, fifteen years of detail and the big picture thereof disappears.

Statement: Water Resilience Portfolio Initiative
Sheryl Hamlin, Santa Paula, California
August 27, 2019

How Can The State Help?

At this point, the State of California needs to step up to a leadership role and create a regional solution for an area of the county consisting of smaller towns, unincorporated areas and agriculture: Piru, Fillmore, Santa Paula, Saticoy, El Rio, and Ventura.

1. All of the stakeholders must be educated in water as a reusable resource with appropriate systems to ensure reliable reuse. The framework must become a living system:
https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drinking_water/certlic/drinkingwater/direct_potable_reuse.html
2. The cities south of the Santa Clara may take advantage of the Calleguas' brine line to carry effluent from the wastewater plants to Oxnard. But the cities north of the river cannot, so planning for such a strategic venture must be part of the regional plan. This might include purchase of the defunct Santa Clara Wastewater company right-of-way.
3. A topology of shared resources must be built: shared water softening (pellet systems, not membranes), shared reverse osmosis plants, shared advance treatment plants for potable reuse.
4. A shared biofuel plant(s) for this area must be created to create power and reduce the heavily loaded truck trips carrying the compressed solids to sludge factories. Ventura County Sanitation ran such a plant for a while and has experience. Unfortunately, during the downturn the plant was shut down.
<http://biomassmagazine.com/articles/3374/vrsd-provides-regional-biosolids-management-solution>
5. A district must be formed so that a base of monies will be collected to fund these projects in perpetuity.
6. Testing of bacteria must be resolved by the Water Board. The committee studying it has reached no conclusions as yet, while areas plan to reuse water without adequate testing:
<https://www.citizensjournal.us/editorial-are-water-agencies-willing-and-prepared-to-test/>

Statement: Water Resilience Portfolio Initiative
Sheryl Hamlin, Santa Paula, California
August 27, 2019

Who Takes the Lead?

As an example, Santa Clara Valley has created a district for chloride control managed by the Regional Sanitation District: <https://lacs.org/wastewater/chloridefacplannop/default.asp> . This plan has won an award for chloride compliance: <https://www.aees.org/e3scompetition/2015grandprize-planning.php> .

The city of Valencia innovated with a successful pilot project to utilize a modified Dutch pellet system for water softening. Pellets are reusable and the material collected has value. Note file on WaterBoard Legacy folder previously: http://roathdesign.com/santapauladocs/Castaic_workplan_prop84.pdf

Other examples include: <https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/15/8/1592/pdf> (“Full-Scale Experimental Study of Groundwater Softening in a Circulating Pellet Fluidized Reactor?” MDPI)

Different aspects of a model for a regional water system can be found within agencies across the State. How much longer, for example, can Santa Paula kick the can down the chloride road while the chloride count increases as the population increases? When will the next huge rain cause percolation effluent to flow to the river?

Thank you for reaching out today.

Statement: Water Resilience Portfolio Initiative
Sheryl Hamlin, Santa Paula, California
August 27, 2019