

PUBLIC WORKS AGENCY
county of ventura

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AUG 18 RECD

C.A.G.

Director
Arthur E. Goulet

Representing Ex-officio:

Ventura County Flood Control District
Ventura County Waterworks Districts
No. 1, 16, 17, and 19
Lake Sherwood Community Services District
Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency

Deputy Directors

William B. Britt
Transportation
John C. Crowley
Water Resources & Development
Robert E. Quinn, Jr.
Engineering Services
Paul W. Ruffin
Central Services
Alex Sheydayi
Flood Control

August 15, 1997

M. L. "Lin" Koester
Chief Administrative Officer
County of Ventura
800 S. Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO THE 1996-97 FINAL GRAND JURY REPORT

Dear Lin:

The subject Grand Jury Report contained four recommendations in the chapter entitled "Nitrate Contamination in the Oxnard Plain Groundwater" that are under the purview of the Public Works Agency. The recommendations are contained on page 77. These are addressed by restating the number and text of each of them, with our response immediately following.

Recommendation Number 4. The County must aggressively enforce provisions of current and future Conditional Use Permits issued to firms engaged in operations which could have an adverse affect on groundwater quality.

This recommendation should also be responded to by the Resource Management Agency (RMA) since it falls within their purview as the lead agency for issuing Conditional Use Permits (CUP's). However, we concur in the recommendation and have already begun its implementation.

Recommendation Number 5. Septic tanks situated in the Oxnard Plain Forebay Basin area must be replaced with a modern sewage disposal system at the earliest possible time.

We support this recommendation, however, its implementation in the foreseeable future is not likely. The soils in the Oxnard Plain Forebay Basin are granular and generally allow for trouble-free operation of septic tanks. The absence of septic tank problems and the minimal cost to maintain septic



tanks result in little financial incentive for the property owners in this area to pay for the construction and ongoing operation and maintenance of a community sewer system. Consequently, implementation will be totally dependent upon obtaining grant funding in an amount sufficient to ensure reasonable monthly sewer service charges.

As stated in the findings of the Grand Jury Report, the County has previously applied for grant funding, but was not successful. We will continue to seek grant funding in the future, as opportunities present themselves. Once funding is assured, the community will be surveyed to ensure support, prior to proceeding with any project. Unless we can obtain 100% grant funding, implementation will require ballot approval, which may be difficult to accomplish because there is no history of septic system failures in this area.

Recommendation Number 11. The County must make every effort to take monthly samples and tests of the groundwater contained in the pits at S.P. Milling mining site.

This recommendation should also be responded to by RMA since it falls within their purview as the lead agency for issuing CUP's.

We do not concur in this recommendation, since monthly monitoring will only detect constituents already in the groundwater, and those added by surface runoff, neither of which are caused by the mining operation. Furthermore, groundwater degradation cannot be prevented or mitigated by such monitoring.

The S.P. Milling pits contain water that is a combination of adjacent groundwater and surface runoff. (Recent samples taken from the water in the pits reveal that certain constituents are derived from surface runoff.)

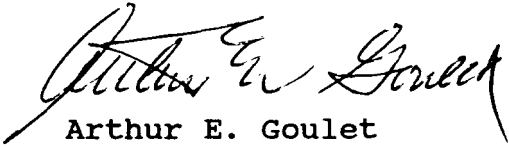
Therefore, as an alternative to the Grand Jury's Recommendation Number 11, the Public Works Agency will work with RMA in an effort to require all surface waters to be directed away from the pits, and to require S.P. Milling to develop a revised reclamation plan which provides a long term solution to groundwater contamination.

Additionally, we will be requesting that RMA ask S.P. Milling to enhance their current level of security, in order to preclude direct contamination from unauthorized dumping.

Additionally, the City of Oxnard should consider constructing one or more monitoring wells upgradient of their domestic water supply wells to provide advanced detection of contaminated groundwater which may potentially affect their domestic water supply.

If there are any questions concerning the foregoing, please let me know.

Respectfully submitted,



Arthur E. Goulet
Director

AEG/rb

aeg12/grdjry32
cf/admin/grdjry

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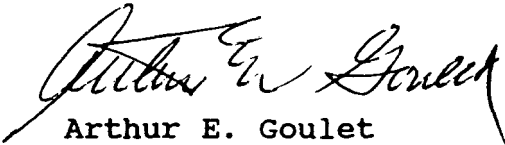
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