



WATER NEEDED — Farmers in the area are concerned about their crops especially since voters rejected state water Tuesday.

Photo by Jim Mine

# Residents reject state water by 24 votes

By Cindy Blankenburg

NIPOMO — Voters here went to the polls and refused to turn on the state water tap in the Nipomo Community Services District on Tuesday.

With 99.7 percent of the vote counted, the binding resolution on whether to participate in the state water project failed by 24 votes.

There were not enough disputed votes to change the decision, election officials said.

Official results from the San Luis Obispo County Clerk's Office showed 51.6 of the voters or 349 people didn't want state water.

There were 325 yes votes for 48.1 percent.

There are 2,324 registered voters in NCS D's boundaries. Total votes cast were 676, with 165 of those by absentee ballots and 511 in person.

Meanwhile, voters in Morro Bay were passing state water. The advisory vote had 65.9 percent or 1,619 people vote yes. There were 1,172 people or 41.2 percent voting against the measure. Votes will become final after the county Board of Supervisors certifies them at its next meeting.

"That's too bad," said Steven Small, vice-chairman of the Nipomo

Community Services District. "The people have spoken. If that's what they want, that's what they will get."

The board will have to go back and look at other possibilities, he said. Currently, NCS D is pumping 1,200 acre-feet of water a year. The district may have to pump even more to serve the needs of the projected population growth.

"It's a shame because the pipeline will be passing so close," Small said. "We are missing a grand opportunity."

Small said he hoped state water would give the area an opportunity

to look at alternatives.

"I saw the state water project as a Band-Aid. It could reduce our groundwater pumping and give us a chance to recharge the basin some while we looked for other water sources.

"If state water is offered again, it will never be this low (in price) again."

The vote even surprised those who came out against the water project.

"I am very surprised," said Glenn Peck Sr., who was against state water. "I expected Nipomo to go for it since nobody listens to me. I've

been working for three years to get the word out. I take full credit for the defeat."

As for Morro Bay, Peck said the people there are "plain stupid." They will have to pay for desalination, state water and water from Nacimiento Lake.

"How are they going pay for it?" he asked.

"People who say they're for state water are like people who are on talk shows," Peck said. "They say they don't know a lot about it, but they are in favor of it."

"Anybody who has looked into it (Continued on page 20)

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(Continued from page 1)  
is against state water.”

Now Peck is concerned whether the NCSD board will abide by the voters wishes.

Citizens for Honest Representation member Ed Sauer said, “I think it’s foolhardy to have a water pipeline and not have a tap into it.”

“The whole Nipomo community could be hauling in water like the people who live on North Thompson and Summit Station Road.”

“It doesn’t make much sense to me,” Sauer said. He was one of the

authors for the argument in favor of state water, called Measure C on the ballot.

The farmers in that area are trying to form another water district because some of their wells are reported to be dry. In fact, the group was meeting Tuesday night.

NCSD President David Manriquez could not be reached for comment because he was reportedly attending that meeting.

Sauer said his stance on state water is based on several things, including the law which states that

each overlying owner can extract as much groundwater as it needs to provide for the land.

Additionally, the NCSD was formed by county Resolution 18-65 on Jan. 18, 1965, for the purpose of supplying water for domestic use, sanitation, fire protection, sewage, garbage, etc. And, he said, the district has been getting most of its water supply from wells outside the district.

“I guess the NCSD will continue to be dysfunctional as it has been since 1965,” Sauer said.



**BALLOTING** — Poll worker Catherine Mehlschau accepts a ballot from Nipomo resident William Myers in the Tuesday election. Nipomo voters turned down participation in the State Water Project. Photo by Jim Miner