

OCS D may take less state water

By Tom Friesen
Staff Writer

OCEANO — Now that formal contracts are being drawn up, state water is looking less attractive to directors of the Community Services District.

They indicated Wednesday that Oceano will likely reduce the amount of water previously requested from the proposed Coastal Branch, possibly by 30 percent.

After reviewing preliminary drafts of the state water contracts, the board was most concerned about the still-undetermined costs, an accelerated payment schedule and the

loss of local control over groundwater.

"I've always been pro-state water. But after looking at some of these items, I've got a lot of questions," said board President Bill Senna. "It doesn't sound as advantageous as it once did."

He was especially concerned that the contracts could force Oceano to offset possible groundwater overdrafts by recharging the basin with state water.

"It just scares me what we're getting into," he said. "I would hate to give up \$192-an-acre-foot water for

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Report takes issue with flier used in state water election

By Mike Hodgson
Assistant News Editor

NIPOMO — A state analysis of a flier opposing state water is little more than an attempt to minimize the issues with a "blue sky approach," the flier's author said this week.

But the president of Nipomo Community Services District said the state analysis proves the flier was filled with inaccuracies that the author can't substantiate.

The flier was distributed in Nipomo just before the November 1991 election, when voters in the Community Services District turned down participation in the Coastal

Branch of the State Water Project.

NCS D directors blamed the flier for the negative vote, saying it was filled with errors and inaccuracies, and overturned the binding vote by passing another ordinance which made the election non-binding.

Clint Milne, county engineer, forwarded the flier to the California Department of Water Resources for an analysis of its contentions.

That analysis was returned by David N. Kennedy, director of the state agency, and was received by NCS D on Jan. 24. The Five Cities Times-Press-Recorder obtained a copy of

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Report takes issue with election flier

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analysis this week.

David Manriquez, president of the NCS board, said the state analysis is given to district directors as a report and is public information, but has never been discussed in a public meeting of the board.

"It shows a lot of the stuff they said (in the flier) was unsubstantiated," Manriquez said. "A lot of it was just general statements they made with no substantiation."

Charles Gulyash, author of the flier distributed by the Citizens' Planning Alliance, said the state analysis did little to dispel his contentions that state water would be too expensive, too unreliable, and too poor in quality for Nipomo to buy into.

"I think they're trying to minimize the costs, the unknown availability and reliability," Gulyash said of the state analysis. "They're trying to say there will be all the water anybody ever needs."

"They're trying to minimize the pollutants and the future cost that might be added due to repairing dikes, the canal and so forth," he said.

As far as the state refuting actual dollar figures cited in the flier, Gulyash said he took the figures from Van Laurn, a former county engineering department employee who was involved with the state water project with the county for several years.

Laurn later left the county after claiming Milne ordered him not to express his opinions on the State Water Project and allegedly transferred him to other duties for that reason. Milne denies that contention.

Laurn is now employed with the city of Arroyo Grande as the public works director. He could not be reached at the city or at home by press time.

The Department of Water Resources analysis disagreed with the flier's contention that Nipomo would pay at least \$900 per acre-foot or "about double the 'official price' of \$470 per acre-foot" and questions the source of the figures.

According to the state, if NCS takes its full entitlement of 3,500 acre-feet, and the full-size aqueduct alternative is constructed, the cost would be \$530 per acre-foot "plus local distribution costs."

Gulyash said the figures in the flier came from Laurn as "official state estimates," but there was a list of items not included in the official estimates which could push the cost higher.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA - THE RESOURCES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
1700 NORTH STREET, 10th FLOOR
SACRAMENTO, CA 95833
(916) 223-2991

DATE: JAN 15 1992

Voter Information: State Water Project - Nipomo
Vote! Tuesday, November 5, 1991 Vote!

There is an election on Tuesday in which Nipomo Community Service District voters are being asked to decide whether Nipomo should be in the future of the State Water Project. This brochure has been prepared by Citizens' Planning Alliance, a San Luis Obispo County non-profit organization. It is mailed to you to help you understand that State Water is a Fraud. As you read through this information, understand that Citizens' Planning Alliance is a front for an business or other profit making organization. Its stake in this vote is simply the economic stability of San Luis Obispo County so we will be able to afford to pay for a real source if the need for one arises.

They will pay at least \$900/acre-foot. This is about SIX times higher than well water...

points that make the State Water into the Central Coast a bad idea. It is also the costs that will be very expensive, and not just the levee system, repair of the Sacramento delta would have to pay the share. If you vote for State Water you might as well get out your check book, sign all the checks, leave the amount blank and send them to Sacramento so they can fill in any amount they want.

Yes, you are right, this is stupid. But there is more. It gets worse.

State Water is rapidly becoming unavailable.

1) Northern California communities have first rights to their watersheds and can legally refuse, like Owens Valley, to allow the export of their water. Northern California is growing very rapidly, and Resources like water, oil, clean air, etc. are not endless except in State and County engineers' dreams.

2) Whatever it chooses to whatever expansion they are not receiving. I don't need any more water.

3) their water needs will seriously impact the State Water Project's ability to supply existing customers (like Los Angeles Metropolitan Water District).

4) Arizona, which is also growing rapidly, owns not needed yet. When Arizona does need it, there will be less water available for Southern California. They will have to rely more and more on the already over committed State Water System.

Dear Mr. Milne:

This is in reply to your letter of November 30, 1991 regarding the recent vote in the Nipomo Community Service District on the question of obtaining water from the State Water Project. Included in your letter was a copy of a flier prepared by the Citizens Planning Alliance. You asked that we make comments on the flier with respect to a number of errors and misrepresentation of facts concerning the SWP.

Attached are our comments on specific factual items and statements related to the SWP that were presented in the flier. We hope that these comments will help clarify the issues concerning the SWP.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss these issues further, please call Donald R. Long, Chief of the State Water Project Analysis Office at (916) 653-4313.

Sincerely,
David H. Kennedy
Director

Attachment
cc: Mr. Robert B. Almy
Water Agency Manager
Santa Barbara County Water Agency
172 West Figueroa Street, Suite B
Santa Barbara, California 93101

RECEIVED
JAN 24 1992
NIPOMO COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

tem may have to make "some massive added expenditures" that could cost "several billion dollars" and "Nipomo would have to pay their share."

The state response said the projected costs of the Kern Water Bank, Los Banos Grandes Reservoir and the Delta facilities could increase the costs of water to Nipomo by about \$50 per acre-foot.

Donald R. Long, chief of the State Water Project Analysis Office, said Thursday he didn't know off-hand what the total cost of those facilities might be or if "several billion dollars" was close to accurate.

"My statement is Nipomo would have to pay its share," Gulyash said. "I would expect it to go up \$50 to \$100 per acre-foot."

He said the peat levees on the Sacramento Delta are "in terrible shape" and they alone will require "if not billions many hundreds of millions" of dollars.

The flier said state water is rapidly becoming unavailable.

The state analysis said studies indicate the project can deliver full entitlement in 53 percent of the years and half or greater in 95 percent of the years.

It said reliability will increase to full entitlement in 70 percent of the years and to 65 percent or more in 95 percent of the years as facilities

reduction of pumping in the delta. "It's a pipe dream," he said. "Unless somebody has a magic wand or something, they can't create water that was not there before."

The state also said the Coastal Branch will improve water supply reliability in this county because it will add a new source and will allow water banking or exchanges during drought.

Gulyash said, "They're just going to subtract water from somebody else to give to this county. ... You know if there are more users going to the same source, there is less to go around."

The flier said the state water system could deliver only 2.4 million acre-feet "in a good year."

The state analysis said 2.4 million acre-feet is the current firm yield during a seven-year dry period. More can be delivered during normal and wet years.

"More? Like what, 2.6 million?" Gulyash responded, adding that his figures came from Laurn and from Mark Reasoner's book "Cadillac Desert."

He said the area won't need water in normal and wet years, and said Santa Margarita, Lopez and Nacimiento lakes are better alternatives.

Manriquez said Nacimiento "is a big question mark." San Luis Obispo has the rights to Santa Mar-

inated water is estimated to cost \$1,800 per acre-foot because of high energy use, and the impact of brine discharge on the marine environment is not well understood.

It said Nipomo also would have the cost of transporting desalinated water from the coast.

Gulyash said the \$1,800 figure refers to reverse osmosis, which is the most expensive way. He said flash distillation using industrial waste heat costs less.

He also said there are high energy costs associated with pumping state water up over higher elevations.

Manriquez said desalination is not cost effective. "Like the Santa Barbara plant: They got it on line and they're going to run it for a few months and shut it down for three years because now they don't need it. But people will continue to pay for it on their water bills."

Gulyash said studies indicate the Nipomo groundwater basin holds "millions of acre-feet" and a deep aquifer that extends under the ocean could be pumped for 80 years, although he wouldn't advocate that.

"Nipomo can get by on its existing supply," he said, because experts say "the Nipomo Mesa has a higher aquifer that can sustain it for quite some time."

Manriquez said most of the NCS water comes from outside district boundaries and property

claiming Milne ordered him not to express his opinions on the State Water Project and allegedly transferred him to other duties for that reason. Milne denies that contention.

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According to the state, if NCS D takes its full entitlement of 3,500 acre-feet, and the full-size aqueduct alternative is constructed, the cost would be \$530 per acre-foot "plus local distribution costs."

Gulyash said the figures in the flier came from Laurn as "official state estimates," but there was a list of items not included in the official estimates which could push the cost higher.

Adding the NCS D entitlement and California Cities Water Co.'s entitlement of 500 acre-feet, the flier said the annual cost of 4,000 acre-feet at \$900 would be \$3.6 million, and if Nipomo didn't get any water, the cost would drop to 85 percent of that or \$3.06 million per year.

Using the \$530 figure, the state said the annual cost for full entitlement would be \$2.12 million. If Nipomo took no water, no pumping costs would be incurred and the cost would drop to 82 percent or \$1.748 million per year.

The flier claimed the operating and maintenance costs of the project have increased by 18 percent per year.

The state response said 18 percent was the average annual increase for the five-year period of 1982-83 to 1986-87, reflecting the addition of Warner, Alamo, Thermalito and Bottle Rock powerplants and the lower costs incurred when the project began operating as an electric utility in '83.

It said the projected increase for the five-year period of 1992 to 1996 will be 5 percent per year.

"Who's to say?" asked Gulyash. Again, that 18 percent came directly from Van Laurn. I assume he wasn't making up the numbers. I wasn't."

Gulyash said construction of the Los Banos reservoir and the peripheral canal will add to the costs just like the other facilities did.

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tem, Los Banos Reservoir and the Delta facilities could increase the costs of water to Nipomo by about \$50 per acre-foot.

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"I completely disagree with this 'blue sky approach,'" Gulyash said, noting that increased demand from both Northern and Southern California will cut deliveries elsewhere and ecological concerns may cause a

water from the ocean. Gulyash said the \$1,800 figure refers to reverse osmosis, which is the most expensive way. He said flash distillation using industrial waste heat costs less.

He also said there are high energy costs associated with pumping state water up over higher elevations.

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Manriquez said most of the NCS D water comes from outside district boundaries and property owners could sue to halt the district from pumping.

He said Gulyash and other anti-state water people's "attitude is take the water and let someone else litigate. They have no respect for the rights of the property owners."

The flier said local alternatives are cheaper and 100 percent reliable and cited desalination.

The state responded that desali-



SURF SAFARI — Children find the gentle waves of Avila Beach just right for wading under the summer-like sun on Thursday. Rain could put a damper on beach parties this weekend (see the weather box on page 4).
Photo by Jim Miner