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March 4, 2002

Noel King
County Public Works Department
Flood Control & Conservation District
County Government Center, Room 207
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

SUBJECT: San Luis Obispo County Unallocated State Water
Santa Maria Groundwater Adjudication

For many months the groundwater producers in the Santa Maria groundwater basin, including Nipomo Community Services District, have been conducting negotiations that, if successful, should result in the settlement of lawsuits among them and the creation of a physical solution for groundwater management and the protection of water rights. A physical solution would be administered by the Court under its continuing jurisdiction and using a Court-appointed watermaster.

It now appears that one part of a physical solution may involve the correction of overdraft in the portion of the basin that underlies Nipomo Mesa. Recent hydrologic studies indicate a present and future overdraft on the order of 1000 to 4000 acre-feet per year. The principal implication of overdraft is the potential for seawater intrusion.

To correct the overdraft and combat seawater intrusion it is necessary to increase the amount of water in storage under the Mesa. Storage can be increased either directly by adding imported water by percolation or injection, or indirectly by reducing groundwater production and using imported water instead.

Before the parties can agree to, and the Court accept, a physical solution that includes using imported water they need to know whether or not imported water is or can be made available to the Court for that purpose. It appears that the source of imported water that could most readily be made available is San Luis Obispo County's State Water Project (SWP) contract.

Setting aside any consideration of the costs and conveyance that may be involved, could San Luis Obispo County make available to the Court up to 4000 acre-feet per year of SWP water if it is required to implement a physical solution to overdraft and seawater intrusion for the Nipomo Mesa?

If you have any questions in this matter, please contact me.

Very truly yours,

NIPOMO COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT


Doug Jones
General Manager

cc: NCSO Board of Directors
Supervisor 4th District, K H Achadjian
Jim Markman, District Special Water Counsel
Jon Seitz, District Legal Counsel

SMWCD/STATE WATER