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Analyze rhetoric of NCSD candidates

To the Editor:

Water is the lifeblood of any community. In the coming elections you will hear and read a lot of rhetoric about how candidates for the various open seats will offer you their solutions.

Consider these basic truths and the words of Santa Clara Judge William Cahill, presently presiding over the Santa Maria groundwater litigation: "If the problem at Twitchell Dam is resolved, there will always be more than enough water for everyone in the valley, even in severe drought." He also said, "Nothing in life is certain, but the odds are there will never be a water shortage for any of you."

The Nipomo Mesa is included in this settlement. After 60 hours of intense mediation by all of the parties, Judge Cahill has crafted a settlement proposal for all parties to sign. If accepted, this proposal will address the landowner's priority claim and not meter their wells.

The Nipomo Mesa consists of four major players: Nipomo Community Services District, Cal Cities, Rural Water Co. and The Woodlands project. Each will be allowed to pump up to a certain figure. Subsequently, all will have to find a source of supplemental water to make up any difference from the allotted amount to be pumped.

At present, NCSD is a lead agency on the Mesa and the best choice to continue in that role. NCSD's water attorney, James Markman, was a major player in the Mojave case and passed over in early attorney selection because the best always cost more. After being contacted by NCSD, he adjusted his fee and little Nipomo acquired the services of a major player and his competent staff.

Save The Mesa and others would like to change the current leadership role of NCSD to that of a minor player and impose a moratorium on water hookups. If this happens, Cal Cities will fill the void, provide the water for the same growth, and the Woodlands will form their own water company. In the end, NCSD

rates will skyrocket because \$11 million will still be needed for current capital improvements for fire flow and existing capacity. The money must be spent. If developer fees do not fill this need then the ratepayers will.

NCSD has a well site in the Santa Maria River bed that can provide all the additional water the district will need, plus the City of Santa Maria has stated it has water to sell to NCSD. This means that our water future is secure to about 2050, if an agreement is reached and the seven-member management board proposed by Judge Cahill is accepted. This board will be the Basic Management Committee (BMC). It will have seven members, three landowners, three public water purveyors and one court-appointed basin engineer.

Any candidate who comes out opposing any of the above, wants to use water to control growth and will not solve the water problems of the area.

You may not always agree with me, but to date I have never lied to you. I have always given you the facts as I see them and let you make up your own mind. That's all I ask of you in the coming election.

Bob Blair
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