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Eby may change power balance

Challenger's election brings another environmental voice to the board of directors

Stephanie Finucane
The Tribune

NIPOMO - Challenger Ed Eby appears to have won a seat on the Nipomo Community Services District Board of Directors, replacing a strong pro-growth vote with an environmentalist one.

Incumbent Mike Winn headed toward re-election to the other contested seat, although challenger Michael Smith lagged only slightly with five of eight precincts reporting.

Bob Blair, an incumbent, appeared to have lost.

Eby, a retired engineer, is a longtime member of Save the Mesa, the environmentalist group that has taken both the county and the community services district to court alleging they did inadequate environmental review on various projects.

His election could change the balance of power on the board because incumbents Judith Wirsing and Clifford Trotter have in the past been on the losing side of 3-2 votes to deny water to some projects, based on concerns about the groundwater basin.

Meanwhile, Winn has repeatedly rejected efforts to impose a building moratorium in the fast-growing community, where there's concern that the water basin may be in jeopardy. He did, however, recently vote to limit the amount of water allocated each year to new development.

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