

Arroyo Grande

Desal option in water issue

To the Editor:

A recent letter writer claims that we on the Mesa are using twice as much water as is being replaced by rainfall. This statement is blatantly false.

In 2005, after seven years of expert testimony, the Santa Clara courts stipulated that the Santa Maria basin is not now, nor has ever been, in overdraft. However, the stipulation established management areas to protect it.

On the Mesa, a technical group that includes the four water purveyors — NCS D, Woodlands Mutual, Golden State and Rural water companies, plus ConocoPhillips — are charged with monitoring and maintaining the health of the Nipomo Mesa water supply. This group is required to submit annual detailed reports to the court. None of these reports say that our water supply is in imminent danger.

The waterline project proposed by NCS D will cost approximately \$400 million over 30 years, and at 3,000 acre-feet of water per year will cost an average of \$4,167 per acre-foot. It will not produce any new water for the basin. All it will do is move water to the Mesa that would normally flow here anyway.

Therefore, in times of extended drought, pumping water from Santa Maria through this pipeline could substantially lower the amount of water flowing into our part of the basin, with disastrous effects on the water levels of the Mesa.

In 2007, NCS D revisited desalination as an option. While desal will take longer, the costs will be less. It will produce 3,300 acre-feet more water and add new water to protect our aquifer. Costs could be further reduced if the Mesa partnered with other cities that are also exploring desal.

Pat Eby

Nipomo

<http://www.timespressrecorder.com/articles/2011/07/21/opinion/letters/letter04.txt>