

## Nipomo desalination

Recent letters advocating desalination as an alternative to the proposed water pipeline from Santa Maria to Nipomo have failed to address the high costs, environmental challenges and permitting hurdles involved with building a desalination plant.

Water produced at the small Sand City desalination plant in Monterey County will cost \$2,599 per acre-foot. Water to be produced at a much larger plant in Carlsbad is projected to cost \$1,865 per acre-foot. The cost of water produced by a plant to serve the Nipomo Mesa would likely fall between those two amounts and would significantly exceed the cost of purchasing water from Santa Maria.

Desalination plants use large amounts of energy and have environmental impacts that cannot be fully mitigated. These impacts include greenhouse gas emissions, disposal of the brine left over from the process, and the effects on marine life.

Cambria had a desalination plant permitted and ready to break ground in 1996; 16 years later, they are still trying to get permits to do preliminary testing. It would be unrealistic to expect that a project in Nipomo could clear all regulatory requirements and legal challenges in a far shorter period of time.

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Read more here: <http://www.sanluisobispo.com/2012/03/04/1975369/letters-to-the-editor-35.html#storylink=cpy>