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Chair Alvin Edwards and Members of the Board
Monterey Peninsula Water Management District

Meeting Agenda for May 16, 2005
RE: Regional Governance of Water Issues

The public is looking for more participation in water policy and projects, not less. Instead of approving the proposal before you to form a water board consisting of appointed members that excludes fair representation from north and south county—and the ability of voters to choose their own candidates—we ask you to consider formation of an **elected** regional water board that will encompass all of Monterey County.


Representatives would be chosen by voters for their stance on water policies and projects. They would serve all the people of Monterey County. This truly *regional* water board could consist of nine elected members, one each from the supervisorial districts and four elected from the county at large.

In the interim, the five **elected** members of the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District and four appointed members from the Monterey County Water Resources Agency could serve for two years on a consolidated regional water board while protocol and election schedules are implemented.

By consolidating these two boards taxpayers will save money on duplicated administration costs and deal with one agency concerning water projects like the Moss Landing desalination plant, the Carmel River Dam and the Salinas Valley Water Project.

Water projects and policy have become so intertwined and overlapping that they affect everyone in Monterey County. An elected regional water board would certainly provide the most comprehensive approach to solving our water problems. Voters and ratepayers are clamoring for leadership that takes the big picture into consideration when deciding massive public works projects of this nature. A regional board could provide that leadership.

It is imperative that members of such a board are elected for their expertise and opinions regarding water policy and projects. Appointed politicians and bureaucrats won't necessarily represent the will of the people since they are already committed to other agendas.


Madeleine Clark, Director
Elkhorn Slough Coalition

Rec'd
5/16/05
Board mtg.

4/4/04

THE HERALD'S VIEW

McPherson's water proposal merits feedback

REMARKABLY
SIMILAR TO
CURTIS WEEK'S
WATER BOARD
PROPOSAL,* THIS
LEGISLATION WAS
REJECTED TWICE
BY MEMBERS OF
THE STATE ASSEMBLY.

Seemingly determined to shift control of the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District from voters to mayors, state Sen. Bruce McPherson is circulating the draft of a measure "in an effort to seek feedback on the proposal" before introducing in bill form. It would make these key changes:

- Elected members of the water board would be gradually replaced by Peninsula mayors. The Peninsula supervisor would continue to serve on the board.

- Members could use "weighted voting." The mayors of Monterey, Seaside and Marina would carry more weight than other mayors.

- Major water projects, such as a desalination plant, could proceed without a public vote. Currently, Peninsula water projects need voter approval.

The measure is a first cousin to legislation McPherson introduced last year, but would entail less organizational upheaval.

McPherson "strongly believes in the vision of mayors," explained James Jack, his chief of staff. Since mayors are responsible for implementing the state's housing goals, they are in the best position to determine where new homes should go and provide the necessary water.

However, Peninsula cities are largely built out. Most of the land for new housing is located in unincorporated areas, not within Monterey, Pacific Grove, Carmel, Del Rey Oaks, Seaside, Marina and Sand City.

Weighted voting is sometimes useful, sometimes not. The use of weighted voting by the Fort Ord Reuse Authority has truncated some discussions about affordable housing, for example.

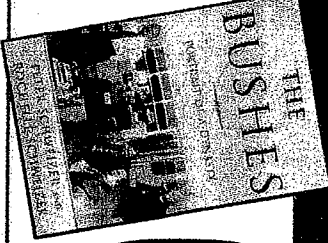
McPherson's rationale for wanting to eliminate the public's right to vote on major water projects, is that no other special districts operates that way. Of the 3,400 special districts in California, the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District is the only one that requires voter approval of big projects.

McPherson's "effort to get feedback" may have turned out differently than he may have expected: The water board voted 5-1 to oppose the draft amendments, with Sand City Mayor David Pendergrass casting the only yes vote. Chairman Alvin Edward said a better approach would be to give the board a set period — 12 years, say — and if there still isn't a viable water project, dissolve it. No doubt many will agree.

The Herald encourages Peninsula residents to follow through on the senator's request for feedback. Sen. Bruce McPherson's address is State Capitol, Room 4081, Sacramento, CA 95814 His FAX is (916) 445-8081. Direct email to senatormcpherson@sen.ca.gov.

* REGIONAL URBAN WATER SUPPLY BOARD

Book
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Bush, FA



Commentary

Coming Monday

On the Opinion page: Mexico's politics are gridlocked. If Mexico does not get some real leadership, it's likely to have a real crisis.

—Thomas L. Friedman

www.montereyherald.com

Substantial taxpayer savings could be gained by combining the existing (water agencies) into one regional water board

County needs elected regional water management

By MADELEINE GLANK

Guest Commentary

We welcome the opportunity to comment on state Sen. Bruce McPherson's proposed legislation to restructure the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District.

By replacing elected representatives of the district with appointed members from six Monterey Peninsula cities and a Board of Supervisor's appointee, he hopes to expedite water projects and propel water policy forward. The cities are Monterey, Seaside, Pacific Grove, Carmel, Del Rey Oaks and Sand City.

While we commend McPherson for his efforts to bring these important

concerns to the attention of his constituents, McPherson's proposed legislation prevents voter participation in the process by not only eliminating the public's right to choose their own representatives, but by also denying citizens the right to approve proposed water projects.

The public is looking for more participation in the water projects process, not less. As the director of the Elkhorn Slough Coalition, we would like to suggest that McPherson modify his legislation to provide for an elected Regional Water

Board to encompass all of Monterey County.

Such a board could consist of nine elected members, one each from the supervisorial districts and four elected from the county at large. Individuals elected would serve for one six-year term with a midterm vote of confidence. Board members failing to win 51 percent approval would serve the remainder of their term *ex officio*.

In the interim, legislation could propose that this Regional Water Board replace the Monterey Peninsula Water

Management District and the Monterey County Water Resources Agency. An interim board, to serve for two years, could consist of the five elected representatives from the Peninsula board and four appointed representatives from the county board.

Substantial taxpayer savings could be gained by combining the existing Monterey Peninsula Water Management District and the Monterey County Water Resources Agency into one Regional Water Board.

This would allow all residents of Monterey County to deal with one agency concerning water projects like

the proposed Moss Landing desalination plant. Projects of this size and magnitude are so intertwined and overlapping in all geographic areas that they affect everyone in Monterey County.

A Regional Water Board would certainly provide the most comprehensive approach to solving our water problems. The public is clamoring for leadership that takes the "big picture" into consideration when deciding public works projects of this nature. A Regional Water Board would provide that vehicle.

Madeline Clark is director of the Elkhorn Slough Coalition.

