

Submitted by Molly Erickson  
at 11/24/2011 Board Meeting  
Item 16



May 4, 2011

John Ramirez, Director  
Monterey County Health Department  
1270 Natividad Street  
Salinas, CA 93906

**Subject: Support for Extension on County Ordinance No. 5160 -- Temporary  
Moratorium on Fractured Rock Wells within the Monterey Peninsula Water  
Management District**

Dear Mr. Ramirez:

The Monterey Peninsula Water Management District (MPWMD or District) has worked closely with the Environmental Health Division of the Monterey County Health Department (MCHD) regarding coordinated regulation of water wells, particularly wells located in fractured rock formations. In 2010, the District supported Monterey County Ordinance No. 5160 as it allows continued investigation of the effects on public health, safety, and welfare of fractured rock well applications within the ordinance area. The moratorium affects new wells on lots smaller than 2.5 acres in the California American Water (Cal-Am) service area for its main water distribution system in the unincorporated areas of the Monterey Peninsula. In fall 2010, the District passed its own Ordinance No. 145, which amended regulation of fractured rock wells as part of the MPWMD Water Distribution System (WDS) permit process.

The District staff supports the continuation of the temporary moratorium for one year, as this time frame will allow completion of a comprehensive MPWMD study of hundreds of fractured rock wells within the District, review of the study results, and discussions about the regulatory ramifications of the study conclusions. For reference, a brief task list for the study is enclosed. A report available for public review is anticipated in late June 2011. Presentations tailored for technical staff and the general public will follow.

The District is confident that the study conclusions will be helpful to MCHD and the Board of Supervisors in making science-based decisions regarding wells in the future. The District is excited about the powerful GIS technology that is used to evaluate extensive data from hundreds of wells, and looks forward to sharing this information with the County.

A reliable water supply is even more essential for those property owners who wish to pursue individual wells on lots in fractured bedrock settings due to lack of access to Cal-Am supply, State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Order 95-10 and Cease and Desist Order (Order 2009-0060), along with the moratorium on new and intensified Cal-Am connections recently approved by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) in March 2011. If a well fails to meet potable water needs, the owner will not have access to Cal-Am water as a back-up

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supply, and would need trucked-in water, similar to the Granite Ridge situation. The District shares MCHD's intent that the Granite Ridge situation not be repeated on the Monterey Peninsula.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter. I can be reached at 831/658-5651 or [darby@mpwmd.net](mailto:darby@mpwmd.net) if you have questions. The technical staff contact regarding the study is Jonathan Lear, Senior Hydrogeologist, at 831/658-5647 or [jlear@mpwmd.net](mailto:jlear@mpwmd.net).

Sincerely,

*Darby W. Fuerst*  
Darby W. Fuerst  
General Manager

Enclosure: task list for MPWMD well study

- Cc: Joe Oliver, WRD Manager
- Jonathan Lear, Senior Hydrogeologist
- Henrietta Stern, Project Manager
- Richard LeWane, MCHD Asst. Director
- Dave Potter, Monterey County Supervisor

