

County of Riverside



SUPERVISOR MARION ASHLEY FIFTH DISTRICT

April 17, 2008

Mr. Steven Rhodes
10587 Jonathan Avenue
Cherry Valley, CA 92223

Dear Mr. Rhodes:

Thank you for your letter regarding your views on water quality in Cherry Valley. While we disagree on a number of important facts and issues, I share your concern regarding water quality and safety. To that end we have worked collectively as a team to ensure that we address issues of concern raised in your correspondence.

After carefully reading your letter, I asked the County Department of Environmental Health to evaluate the "Water Quality Impacts in the Cherry Valley Community of Interest." As you know this body of work was prepared by Wildermuth Environmental. The department's own review was extensive, accurate, and factual, and found the work product "credible and that it identified a number of water quality concerns related to the use of individual waste disposal systems in Cherry Valley." Further, the department found no fault with the study, or the merits thereof, to serve as a guideline and or bench mark for managing the elevated nitrate problem in Cherry Valley well water supply. As a courtesy, for your review and records, I have provided that letter as an attachment to my response.

To ensure accuracy and seek yet another opinion regarding the report issued by Wildermuth, I also submitted a request to the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) to evaluate the validity of the report on scientific merit and methodology. As you know RWQCB is the state entity responsible for preserving, enhancing and restoring the quality of California's water resources, and ensuring their proper allocation and efficient use for the benefit of present and future generations.

Upon receipt of my request the review was assigned to Cindy Li, Ph.D., an engineering geologist for the board. In their response, the RWQCB stated, "Dr. Li found the report to be credible and that it identified a number of water quality concerns related to the use of individual water disposal systems in the Cherry Valley area." To address these concerns the County of Riverside Board of Supervisors, and by my direction, The Environmental Health Department brought forth County Ordinance 871 "Ordinance of the County of Riverside Prohibiting the Installation of Specified Septic Tank Systems in Cherry Valley." As a courtesy and for your review and records, I have provided that Ordinance as an attachment to my response.

Mr. Steven Rhodes
April 17, 2008
Page Two

The RWQCB also commented, "We are supportive of efforts by Riverside County staff to respond to the concerns identified by the Wildermuth Environmental report, and we look forward to continued cooperation between the County and the Regional Board in this matter."

Recent reports of pharmaceuticals in Riverside County's water supply only emphasize the need for our region to bolster measures to protect our precious ground water supply and improve water quality. As a courtesy and for your review and records, I have attached a Press Enterprise Article, Dated March 11, 2008. This feature article reflects the concerns not only of men and women who have devoted their life work to ensuring our water supply is safe, but reflects the concerns by our federal leaders in our nation's capital regarding this issue. It is therefore imperative that we rely on experts to provide guidance utilizing proven scientific methods and practices. I am satisfied with the finding of the Wildermuth report and reviews provided by two additional professional agencies.

I believe the issue at hand is of such importance to our residents that I will ask my colleagues, on the Riverside County Board of Supervisors, to formally authorize and appoint a "Blue Ribbon" panel of experts that will focus on this issue and bring forth recommendations which may lead to resolution of the issue at hand.

Again, thank you for your letter and for sharing your views and opinions with me regarding the water quality in Cherry Valley.

Sincerely,



Marion Ashley
Supervisor, District 5

Enclosures: 1. March 11, 2008 CRWQCB letter
 2. March 18, 2008 RCDEH letter
 3. March 18, 2008 Press-Enterprise Article

CC: Chuck Butcher, General Manager, Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District (BCVWD)
 Albert Chatigny, President, BCVWD Board of Directors
 William Lash, Vice President, BCVWD Board of Directors
 Marquell Dopp, Director, BCVWD Board of Directors

Mr. Steven Rhodes
April 17, 2008
Page Three

Blair Ball, Director, BCVWD Board of Directors
Stella Parks, Director, BCVWD Board of Directors
Alan C. Kapanicas, City Manager, City of Beaumont
Brian De Forge, Mayor, City of Beaumont
WM "Martie" Killough, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Beaumont
Larry Dressel, City Councilmember, City of Beaumont
Jeff Fox, City Councilmember, City of Beaumont
Roger Berg, City Councilmember, City of Beaumont
Brian Nakamura, City Manager, City of Banning
Brenda Salas, Mayor, City of Banning
Debbie Franklin, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Banning
John Machisic, City Councilmember, City of Banning
Barbara Hanna, City Councilmember, City of Banning
Bob Botts, City Councilmember, City of Banning
Jeff Davis, General Manager and Chief Engineer, San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency
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Chris Mann, Director, San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency
Jim Snyder, Director, San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency
Barbara Voigt, Director, San Gorgonio Pass Water Agency
Patsy Reeley, President, Cherry Valley Acres and Neighbors
Nancy Hall, President, Beaumont Citizens for Responsible Growth