



The Regional Water Authority Plan (/initiative/4WpX/the-regional-water-authority-plan)

This plan would create the Santa Cruz County Water District. It would function identically to the Santa Clara Valley Water District, which is responsible for ground water and wholesale of raw and recycled water to the other water agencies (retailers) in the county of Santa Clara. While it would not produce water directly, this proposal would make it easier for the 6 existing water agencies in Santa Cruz County to work together on large projects such as recycled water and aquifer recharge. Particularly it would enable the construction of a water sharing utility corridor along the Rail Trail.

Comments

Kim Adamson 3w, 2d ago

One last thought on this subject, relating to a large district or coordination. My graduate studies were in collaborative governance and I have put them to good use over the years. I also feel very strongly about small local government being the best means of citizen representation. From this basis I would just like to point out that collaboration doesn't require consolidation. It's done well in many places. At my previous District we received statewide recognition for our long time collaborative efforts with two neighboring cities and the county. All four entities

were very different and very different infrastructure needs, but we came together on things we all needed such as a jointly owned treatment plant. Someone in mid-county isn't the best person to tell San Lorenzo what they need to do to fix their problems and vice versa. But there are many areas where we can work together on joint needs. This hasn't been done so well here in the past in my outsiders opinion, but I'm starting to see some real changes.

Manu Koenig 3w, 6d ago

SUGGESTION

Creating a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) might be a more politically feasible first step than defining a new County Wide Water Department. This is how the tri-county area (Santa Cruz, San Benito, Monterey) is moving forward with Community Choice Aggregation.

Bill Smallman 3w, 5d ago

Good Idea. Maybe create the JPA with the intent that it would turn into a Water District? I just don't envision a JPA doing the same things as what Santa Clara Valley Water District does.

Douglas Deitch 4w, 1d ago

PRO

Good idea, but think bigger? <http://dougforsupervisor.com/plan.htm#water>
(<http://dougforsupervisor.com/plan.htm#water>)

Jean Brocklebank 3w, 2d ago

NEUTRAL

I am equivocal about this idea. On the one hand, coordination seems very wise. On the other hand, I am concerned about placing so much power in the hands of a few County Water Dept. elected officials. I think that the various Water Depts. should work together as separate entities, coordinating their various operations.

Bill Smallman 3w, 2d ago

Jean, Perhaps a way to make sure this District does not have too much power in one area, and have an equal say how money is spent, and where the water is distributed equivalently, is to have the County divided up into service areas, with an elected Director from each area.

Kim Adamson 3w, 2d ago

There is already a JPA for management of the mid county basin. In the past year collaborative efforts have been made to prepare to restructure the JPA into a Groundwater Management Authority with representation of all groundwater pumpers. The county accepted a position and the City of Santa Cruz and Pajaro Vally Water Management Agency have also been extended invitation to join the current Soquel Creek, Central Water District and private well representative members. Through a stakeholder process, a structure will be identified that will allow the mid county area to meet the new state requirements for a twenty year groundwater sustainability action plan. If you would like more info, please contact one of the mid county water agencies or attend one of the very well attended private well stakeholder group meetings.

Bill Smallman 3w, 2d ago

Kim, Thanks for the comment. I wasn't really familiar with this JPA, but did hear people talk about it. Seems to me if this group expands including the City and PVRMA, they could put their heads together and create this Special District. As I replied to Manu Koenig, I think, in the future, this governing body should be called a Water District, and function like a scaled down version of the Santa Clara Valley Water District.

Bill Smallman 3w, 2d ago

NEUTRAL

Dorah L Shuey 2w, 6d ago

PRO

How well this works depends on how it is implemented and the level of cooperation and farsightedness of the people working on the proposed authority.

Bill

Smallman 2w, 6d ago

Could not agree with you more. It would be critical to create the charter into something that guides this governing body in a direction that works the best for everyone.

Fred Martinez 2w, 6d ago

QUESTION

Great idea, but which director will step down and which assets owned by the city would be given to regional authority since it has been paid for by city residents and Live Oak?

Bill Smallman 2w, 3d ago

I envision this new authority to purchase and construct new infrastructure improvements, such as the Recycled Water Plant, Distribution Pipelines, Reservoirs - or whatever plans they agree to invest in. They would need a huge capital investment somehow to get started, and they would meter and wholesale this water to all the smaller water agencies the same way, for example SCVWD sells water to San Jose Water. Not sure what assets you are talking about, but all the existing water and waste waste infrastructure would have the same ownership. Also not sure about what you are saying about a Director stepping down. This would be an entirely new Special District, with Directors being required to be a customer of each major water agency.

Purea Koenig 2d, 20h ago

PRO

Continue to pursue this idea. I particularly like using the Rail Trail as a water sharing utility corridor - under a bike path !

Purea Koenig 2d, 20h ago

PRO

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Barry Kane 1d, 23h ago

PRO

We need this for more effective regional planning and cost sharing.