

CACHUMA OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE BOARD

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April 10, 2014

Chairman Steve Lavagnino
Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
105 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

RE: April 15, 2014 Agenda Item Regarding Quagga Mussels and Lake Cachuma

Dear Chairman Lavagnino and Members,

As your Board considers enhanced protocols for the monitoring and prevention of quagga mussels at Lake Cachuma, the Cachuma Operation and Maintenance Board (COMB) expresses its strong support for the County's selecting the most vigorous and robust procedures possible.

COMB has not seen the specific proposal before you, but our general understanding is that it includes expanded quarantine period for boats that do not already have a Cachuma tag affixed to the boat and trailer, an expanded definition of boats requiring quarantine to include kayaks and canoes, and continuation of critically important high temperature power washing of vessels and trailers. We support all of these prevention activities and the heightened vigilance of the County Parks department.

The recent discovery of quagga mussels in nearby Lake Piru, in Ventura County, was alarming to everyone concerned about this invasive species. An infestation of dreissenid mussels--quagga and zebra mussels--at Lake Cachuma would be devastating. The mussels foul water delivery systems, which in this case means the intake system at the lake and the 26-mile-long South Coast Conduit, which conveys water from the lake to the entire South Coast. They also adversely alter the eco-system of the body of water they invade. Should mussels infest a body of water, the literature on the matter suggests that eradication efforts are hugely costly, in fact, orders of magnitude more costly than prevention, and usually accomplish only managed misery rather than actual eradication.

COMB's responsibility is the conveyance of water from Lake Cachuma. This federally-owned reservoir is the principal water source for the entire South Coast of Santa Barbara County. We appreciate the emergency efforts of Parks leadership when the Lake Piru discovery was announced and the attention that has been paid by our County colleagues to COMB's concerns for the security of the water supply and conveyance system.

Further, we support County efforts to expand in-lake monitoring for quaggas, and welcome any County measures to put in place all necessary eradication permits in the eventuality that mussels are detected. Immediate eradication efforts apparently offer the only chance to avoid permanent infestation. If the permitting process is started too late, quick action becomes impossible.

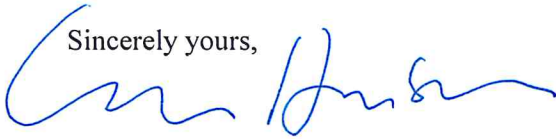
*Carpinteria Valley Water District
City of Santa Barbara
Goleta Water District
Montecito Water District*

*Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District #1
General Manager/Secretary of the Board, Randall M. Ward*

COMB shares the County's interest in encouraging development of a statewide notification system and the dispensing of state funds earmarked for quagga prevention. We are happy to support the County in its efforts to gain access to those funds and to advocate with the County for better information about the movement of trailered boats from lake to lake.

We look forward to continued positive interaction with the County on this very important subject.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lauren Hanson", with a stylized, flowing script.

Lauren Hanson
Board President
Cachuma Operation and Maintenance Board