

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE POSITION ON WATER SUPPLY & DISTRIBUTION

Adopted by the MCL Board of Directors on November 16, 2010

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Marin Conservation League recognizes that our water supply is a finite resource, and that we must accommodate our water use to our Mediterranean climate instead of attempting to create conditions that are at-odds with our natural environment. The County currently uses more water than our existing supply infrastructure can reliably support. Given the high environmental and monetary costs of developing new supplies, water use must be brought into balance with our current sources of water supply. To this end, MCL supports policies and promotes programs that provide Marin residents and businesses a reasonable amount of water without doing further harm to the watersheds, fisheries, climate and other resources on which we depend. The principles and programs we support are consistent with the Marin County 2007 Countywide Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Marin Conservation League continues to support conservation and water use efficiency as the most environmentally responsive and least expensive means of securing water supply and managing demand. The League supports a comprehensive and integrated water strategy that includes elements of both demand reduction and supply augmentation, such as recycled treated wastewater. Recognizing that Marin water districts are already implementing some of these strategies, we recommend the following:

- Improvements to reservoir and distribution system operational efficiency (e.g. leak detection);
- Rate structures and rules for reasonable use to increase water conservation;
- Greater emphasis on public education and outreach focused on changing our choice of products and practices affecting water use (e.g., native and other low water using landscaping, irrigation and appliances);
- Continued efforts to secure reliable sources of renewable energy for water transport and treatment;
- Formal coordination of local governments and water districts to achieve conservation goals, including:
 - o Expansion of opportunities for recycling and reuse of reclaimed wastewater for local use
 - o Adoption and enforcement of no net increase (e.g., 1:1, or even 2:1 offsets) in water demand for new development by all local governments

- Code reforms to enable graywater reclamation and stimulate use of emerging reuse technologies
- Encouragement of small-scale catchment systems where feasible

CURRENT WATER SUPPLY ISSUES

DESALINATION

Desalination should not be adopted as a source of supplemental water supply at this time. Progressively stronger conservation programs and improvements to the existing supply infrastructure may well enable the existing water supply sources to meet future reduced demand reliably. Prior to making any irreversible decisions regarding desalination or putting desalination to a public vote, the MMWD needs sufficient time to implement the integrated conservation, waste reduction and efficiency programs recommended above and to gauge their success in order to determine the need for supplemental water supply.

PIPELINE FROM SONOMA COUNTY

Because of severe environmental impacts on the Russian and Eel Rivers caused by water diversions, MCL continues to oppose importation of additional allotments of Russian River water. (Note that in connection with the Sonoma-Marín Narrows project on 101, the North Marin Water District is proposing to replace the existing pipeline with a new and/or parallel larger pipeline to reduce energy required for pumping. This needs to be monitored closely to ensure that the project does not also increase effective capacity of the replaced pipeline.)