

William Miller

17395 Oak Road
Atascadero, CA 93422

September 10, 2017

Garden Farms Community Water District
Board of Directors
Attn: Marcia Joyce
17005 Walnut Ave
Atascadero, CA 93422

Re: Protest against water rate increase.

Dear Directors:

I am writing to protest the currently proposed water rate increase. While I am reserving judgement on the necessity of the proposed rate increase, I am against the District raising the water rates at this time for the following reasons:

1. **Lack of public information, in general:** In reviewing the District web site, I see that there has been no current information posted regarding Board meetings, agendas, financial status or policy changes since 2015. I believe it is best leadership practice to keep the customers of the District informed in a timely manner via a web site regarding the operations of the District. I occasionally look at the District web site and I have been disappointed to see that the site has not been maintained. This lack of communication is problematic in and of itself if no policy changes are proposed. Once the District proposes to double water rates, the lack of documentation is much more problematic, and prevents customers from assessing the necessity of this proposed increase by review of Board actions and District financial status. Lack of traffic on the web site does not constitute a reason not to maintain current content. Traffic will naturally decrease if content becomes outdated.
2. **Lack of financial records:** I believe the customers of the GFCWD have a right to review approved financial records of the district prior to the District imposing a rate increase. The records should be posted at a readily accessible location, such as the GFCWD web site, or mailed via hard copy, upon request. Without the opportunity for the customer of the District to review the financial records of the district, imposition of any rate increase is arbitrary and unfair.
3. **Incomplete analysis of the impacts of a rate increase:** The letter sent to the GFCWD customers, dated August 14, 2017, outlining the proposed rate increase did not provide a complete

financial analysis. The cost of various quantities of water delivery was not analyzed after the proposed rate increase. I think it only fair and proper if the customers receive a chart indicating the cost of water at various delivery levels (1000, 2500, 5000 Cu feet) with the proposed rate increase factored in and compared directly to surrounding districts.

4. Unfair procedure for adoption of rate increase: In the District letter to customers, dated August 14, 2017, it is stated that the rate increase will go into effect unless a majority of the customers voice an objection. I believe this is an unfair criterion for approving the rate increase. That language seems to indicate that the Board of Directors has made up their minds about the rate increase prior to receiving input from their customers. I submit that any one letter of protest might include compelling logic to persuade the Board to reconsider the structure of the proposed rate increase or to impose a rate increase at all at this time. For example, it seems to me that the District has not provided adequate information to their constituents to evaluate the need for and the rate of increase-- and that claim alone should be enough to convince the Board to delay this decision until such time as their constituents receive the information that is incumbent on the District to provide.

I respectfully request of the District the following:

1. Provide to me the information specified below. I would prefer the information be posted on the District web site as an easier alternative for all concerned, but I will accept hard copies:
 - a. Approved meeting minutes from meeting after 8/19/15 to current.
 - b. Transmit to me in the future all approved minutes unless they can be posted to the District web site.
 - c. Financial statements for the last 24 months.
 - d. District annual budget for the last 2 years.
 - e. Well logs for last 24 months.
 - f. Current budget for capital improvements.
 - g. Copies of all correspondence to the District from customers regarding the proposed rate increase at such time as they become public record.
 - h. Copies of approved contracts for work proposed by subcontractors as allowed by the Brown Act.
2. Postpone the first reading of the rate increase resolution scheduled for the October 11 meeting. The first reading should not be heard until District customers have 60 days to review meeting notes, agendas, well logs, financial reports and any communications to the Board regarding this matter.
3. Considering the October 11 meeting has been noticed, I believe this is a date to be kept to allow District customers to give input to the Board and that a second hearing and first reading of any resolution be calendared after the suggested 60 day review period.
4. Restate the decision process as one that will consider any and all input from the residents of the District and resolve accordingly.

Thank you for considering the above points and providing me with the requested information. And please accept my appreciation for your work in managing the district for the benefit of all residents.

Most Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William Miller". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

William Miller

Cc: County of San Luis Obispo Board of Supervisors
County of San Luis Obispo County Counsel