

PATTERSON FAMILY  
17003 Chestnut Ave  
Garden Farms, CA 93422

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**LETTER OF OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED RATE INCREASE**

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Garden Farms Community Water District  
17005 Walnut Ave  
Atascadero, CA 93422  
(805) 438-3751

Board of Directors:

- Charron Sparks
- John Pinson
- John Billings
- Jay Jamison
- Cory Pereira

Dear Board of Directors for GFCWD,

I am writing this letter to state our opposition to the proposed rate increase submitted by mail to my household and dated August 14, 2017.

Prior to listing my reasons for opposition to this proposed rate increase I would like to take a moment to thank you for your time and energy you provide in operating the GFCWD. I appreciate the water service and love living in this wonderful community in which we all share. Your job is a thankless one and you have to make difficult decisions regarding our water supply.

The reasons for my opposition to this proposed rate increase relate primarily to the subjective reasoning for the rate increase, concerns with property owned by the GFCWD, and the venue of the GFCWD meetings.

The primary concern relates to the limited information provided to the Garden Farms Community. Pursuant to Proposition 218, GFCWD may only charge for fees that meet the funding requirements to provide the property-related service. This means you may only charge fees for capital improvements and maintenance or repair fees. In your letter the only maintenance, repair, or capital costs provided were subjective in nature and did not clearly define what infrastructure needs improvements. In order for a rate increase to be justifiable, I request you provide a spreadsheet identifying the length, age, and current condition of each pipe segment along with the proposed improvement and anticipated costs.

The water rate comparison charts provided in your letter are irrelevant to the proposed rate increase. Proposition 218 does not allow for a rate increase pursuant to local comparisons of local agencies. You must provide actual costs for improvements to infrastructure within your district boundaries that provide direct benefit to the customers within your district boundaries.

In regards to property owned by GFCWD, we take exception. It is my understanding Garden Farms owns at least three parcels within the GFCWD which, in my opinion, do not provide direct benefit to the customers of the Garden Farms Community. The first parcel is APN 059-481-039 located at 16515 El Camino Real. The parcel is approximately 10 feet x 15 feet in size. The land was purchased by GFCWD instead of purchasing a public utility easement. The costs associated with purchasing the land, surveying, and record mapping are approximately ten times the cost of purchasing a utility easement from the landowner. I would like to know the detailed costs associated with this land acquisition and mapping by the GFCWD.

The second and third parcels are 059-461-019 and 059-461-020 which are adjacent parcels located on Aguacita Road. I will refer to these parcels as one property. It is my understanding the overflow drain line and possible other underground utilities exist on this property which do provide direct benefit to the customers of the Garden Farms Community, however, I do not understand why the GFCWD owns this property which, as customers, we have paid for. I have heard only rumor this property is to be used for a future location of the GFCWD clubhouse to hold meetings. If this is really the case, I do not see the direct benefit to the customers of the Garden Farms Community. For this reason, I would recommend the district record a public utility easement where the underground utilities are located and sell the parcels. The sale of the land parcels will provide funds that may be sufficient for capital improvement costs without introducing a rate increase to current customers. The reason I use the subjective word "may" in the previous sentence is because you did not provide the actual anticipated costs required for capital improvements in detail as I mentioned previously in this letter.

My final concern regarding my opposition is the venue of the GFCWD meeting place. As stated in the previous paragraph, I mentioned the building of a new clubhouse would not be a direct benefit to the customers in the Garden Farms Community. It is a significant cost to grade a building pad, install utilities, provide accessible paths of travel and parking, and erect a clubhouse. The current meeting house is located in the Garden Farms Church building which does not provide accessible parking or access. We recommend you hold your meetings at the Santa Margarita Lions Club Community Hall located on I Street, adjacent to the Community Library in Santa Margarita. I spoke with Tom Severn who manages the building and collects monthly payments. He said the annual cost to hold one meeting per month at the Community Hall would cost GFCWD \$510 annually. This venue includes accessible access and parking, is large enough for multiple attendees, and has controlled heating and air to provide a comfortable meeting.

Thank you for taking the time to read our concerns. We sincerely hope you explore the alternative option to sell the property to obtain the funds needed for improvements without requiring additional funds from the community members.

Many Thanks,



Joe Patterson and Family  
17003 Chestnut Avenue  
Garden Farms, CA 93422