

SCOPE
Santa Clarita Organization for Planning and the Environment
TO PROMOTE, PROTECT AND PRESERVE THE ENVIRONMENT, ECOLOGY
AND QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE SANTA CLARITA VALLEY
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5-26-11

APPEAL OF THE MISSION VILLAGE PROJECT No. 04-161-(5)

Request for a RE-CIRCULATION OF THE EIR or SUPPLEMENTAL EIR for the Mission Village and Landmark Projects based on new information that constitutes a major change of circumstances in the Public Services, Waste Water Treatment and Water Quality Sections of the Specific Plan and the subsequent EIRs for these projects.

The Specific Plan for this project was approved in 2003 after extensive review. This approval included a certified EIR that reviewed a wastewater treatment facility to serve the project and supply recycled water to the project. It further described a Backbone Sewage Plan to serve the Water Reclamation facility and the Specific Plan. It guaranteed that all water quality issues would be resolved by an NPDES permit issued with requirements to meet the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) limits for the Santa Clara River.

However, at a Board of Supervisors meeting on January 19th, 2011 (Agenda Item 25), the Sanitation Districts disclosed for the first time, an agreement to treat the first 6000 units of the Newhall Ranch Project dated in 2002. This agreement was never disclosed during the review of the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan, nor during any of the numerous public review processes subsequent to the approval of the Specific Plan. These include the application and approval by the Regional Water Quality Board for an NPDES permit for the Newhall Ranch Water Treatment Facility, the formation of the Newhall Ranch Sanitation District by LAFCO, the Landmark EIR and the extensive process to develop an Alternative Management Plan to attain an acceptable level of chloride that would not impact the beneficial agricultural use of the Santa Clara River.

At the time of the approval of the Newhall Ranch Specific Plan, water quality was a major issue, specifically concern over compliance with the chloride TMDL of 100 mg/l due to its effect on the downstream farming economy. The effluent discharged to the Santa Clara River by the Saugus and Valencia treatment plants currently does not meet that 100mg/l TMDL. The Sanitation Districts were and are now operating under an interim permit slated to expire in 2016. At that time, the EIR and various approvals assured that these requirements would be met through a NPDES permit with the Chloride 100 mg/l effluent limit. In fact, the permit was issued in 2007 with that limit in place. The switch of 6000 units to the Valencia treatment plant will preclude these mitigation measures from reducing the chloride releases to the Santa Clara River. Further, the use of recycled water from the Valencia Plant will increase the salt load in the watershed, since this plant produces recycled water at a higher salt level than permitted for the Newhall Ranch Water Treatment Plant.

The Specific Plan approval also guaranteed that the developer would pay for needed infrastructure for his project. The new proposal to treat the first 6000 units of the Newhall Ranch project in the Valencia Treatment plant places the burden of meeting the chloride TMDL on the public rather than the developer through an increase in sewer fees to provide facilities to meet the TMDL or to pay any fine incurred if the TMDL is not met.

Last, the Backbone Sewage pipeline plan will apparently be changed. This change will necessitate new pipes and lift stations in potentially sensitive areas. This change requires additional CEQA review.

These new, previously undisclosed impacts must be reviewed so that all parties may participate in the development of reasonable and required mitigation measures to address this new proposal. We therefore request either a Supplemental EIR or a focused EIR be circulated for this project and for the Landmark project prior to their review before the Board of Supervisors. We note that this request is made timely within the 6 month period after discovery of new information and/or changed circumstances.

Attachments:

1. Contract between Newhall Land and the LA County Sanitation Districts.
2. SCOPE Letter to the Board of Supervisors dated 1-13-11
3. Letter from the Ventura County Agricultural Coalition submitted to the Planning Commission
4. Letter from United Water to the Regional Water Quality Board