



## North County Watch

Looking Out Today For Tomorrow

October 18, 2012

Paso Robles Groundwater Basin Management Plan Steering Committee  
976 Osos Street, Room 200  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

Dear Committee,

North County Watch is a 501 c3 non-profit Public Benefit corporation. We are an all-volunteer organization committed to sustainable development in and around north San Luis Obispo County.

Please present the following challenge to your membership for discussion and action:

North County Watch challenges the agricultural community to bring forward proposals for water conservation measures for all agricultural operations. The conservation measures must be mandatory, enforceable, and have mechanisms for oversight.

Wells in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin are the sole source of water for the majority of the north county. Water pumped from these wells serves agriculture (67%), urban (18%), rural (12%) and small commercial (3%). As documented in a series of reports and studies, water levels are declining throughout the basin.

As major water users in the basin (67%), irrigated crop growers have the power to keep the basin from overdraft. A robust and successful reduction in agricultural water demand could reverse the basin decline.

Paso residents are doing their share by contracting to purchase and treat Nacimiento water. An average city user is paying \$970 per acre foot now and by 2016 will be paying \$1,920 for an acre foot. In contrast, an estimated cost for rural users and agriculture is only \$130 to \$180 per acre foot.

The County is addressing water demand with an ordinance for new development in the rural areas. Agriculturists, who are concerned about the impacts of these county actions, should reduce pumping, put the basin in balance and thus restore their ability to subdivide.

We realize that every other possible solution should be considered, but many have already been studied and dismissed or will need ample funding and are years from implementation. Reduction in demand is the most immediate and cost effective action to take now.

Please notify us of the meeting date you will discuss and respond to this challenge so that members of the public and press can plan to attend.

Sincerely,

Susan Harvey

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