

Thomas Howard
State Water Resource Board
P.O. Box 100
Sacramento, CA 95812-0100

Sept. 10, 2003

Dear Mr. Howard:

As residents of Paso Robles, we (my wife and I) have been watching the heated debate over the allocation of the limited water resources we have. The debate is full of "factoids" such as "alfalfa used more water per acre than does an acre of grapes" without acknowledging that our current crisis is clearly caused by grape production.

Note, by the way, that in 2002 and 2007 SLO County didn't have ANY acres of alfalfa reported. In 2007, SLO County had a reported 39,616 acres of grapes. How many acres are there now?

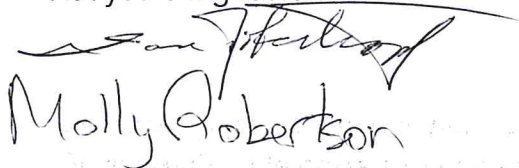
Circular arguments are generating more heat than light, clearly.

The discussion focuses upon the issue of water **quantity**, which is a vital issue, but does not address the issue of water **quality**. I have heard lots of anecdotal comments about the decline in water quality as a result of groundwater withdrawals, but have not seen any scientific studies done.

It would appear to us that California State Law is convoluted as to water **quantity** rights, giving huge powers to those situated over the water, and thus makes any resolution difficult if the argument is solely over quantity.

But we understand that California water **quality** laws clearly trump the ingrained issues of water "ownership." It does not benefit us if we come to a workable resolution on the issue of quantity if the aquifer is so damaged that the salinity has increased, the heavy metals have become prevalent, and the quality of water has been significantly degraded.

We urge you to undertake a study of the effects of high-volume groundwater withdrawals on our water quality and incorporate those results in any recommendations that you bring fourth.



Molly Robertson

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cc: Sue Luft, Chairperson
Water Resources Advisory Committee
San Luis Obispo County