

Mary Jo Deicke ... P.O. Box 3 ... Gualala, CA 95445

Mr. Paul Murphey, Associate Engineering Geologist  
State Water Resources Control Board  
P.O. Box 100  
Sacramento, CA 95812-0100

Via Fax (916)341-5400

DATE: December 26, 2002  
TO: State Water Resources Control Board and Staff  
FROM: Mary Jo Deicke  
RE: North Gualala Water Company, Permit 14853, Request for Determination of  
Legal Classification of Groundwater Appropriated under this Water Right Permit

Having attended the June Hearing, having read the submittals relating to the issue and having been a Planning Commissioner in San Mateo County for many years, I would like to make the following comments.

While I am not an expert on this subject, I have had years of experience with EIRs and similar technical data. I have seen white look like purple and orange look like green. I know that these things can be argued, with passion, from both sides. I consider myself to be an environmentalist who, like you, wants to save our most precious resources for future generations. I have observed arguments for good causes come from a need to save face and "be right" rather than for the best possible conclusion.

The issue you are specifically addressing is very complex and technical – I don't pretend to have an answer for you. I do have a question. Is it your duty to make sure that North Gualala Water Company delivers water that is safe for the consumer, safe for the environment and available/affordable to the community?

We are a small rural community with limited resources. Our remote location causes us to have limitations that are not experienced by most Californians. There are few good paying jobs and many people work two and three jobs to make ends meet. We have a large percentage of elderly people trying to survive on small fixed incomes. We have a strong community of dedicated people who gets things done in a "grass roots" way. We try to take care of our own.

North Gualala Water Company has approximately 1000 hook ups. We are not a large community where the expense of a system can be divided between many. Anything we have to do needs to be divided by the number of consumers. Mr. Bower is not a sophisticated man sitting on the top floor of some multi-level building, directing his portfolio while someone way down the personnel chain is out in a truck testing water or checking lines. Mr. Bower is out in the trenches. His small staff works directly with him in the field. While he could be somewhere else, he is an important part of the fiber of our community. He is out in the middle of the night, on weekends and in the storms. The expectation of walking over to the facet and turning on the water means a lot in our community.

I read and applaud your mission statement:

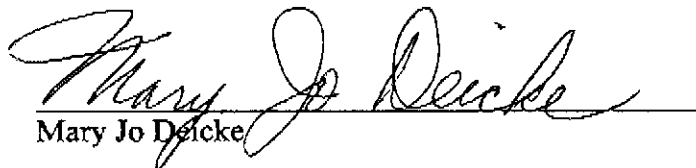
**"The State Board's mission is to preserve, enhance and restore the quality of California's water resources, and ensure their proper allocation and efficient use for the benefit of present and future generations."**

Arthur G. Baggett Jr., Chair

While you are on the board to protect the water resources, are you not also serving on the board to protect the end users of this resource. While the quality is most important to the consumer so is the availability and affordability. Our rates are already very high; adding more cost only raises these rates higher.

I plead for your sense of balance and understanding. Help the residents of Gualala have affordable water when they turn on their water facet.

Respectfully submitted:

  
Mary Jo Deicke

Date:

December 28, 2002

Hard copy to follow by mail.