

Lemos, June

From: Jacob Patterson <jacob.patterson.esq@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 9, 2021 3:59 PM
To: Lemos, June; Munoz, Cristal
Cc: Miller, Tabatha; Smith, John
Subject: Public Comment -- 8/9/21 CC Mtg., Item No. 5E, FBUSD Water Agreement

City Council,

I am concerned about the impacts of Item 5E on the water wells of neighboring and nearby properties in the vicinity of FBUSD's wells. I understand the school district has been using their existing wells primarily for landscaping and field irrigation. I am not sure if the existing wells are pulling from a larger groundwater source (e.g., an underground aquifer) but that should be studied prior to the City pumping additional water from these wells. The draft agreement doesn't specifically identify the locations of the water wells but the wells on different FBUSD property have the potential to impact the availability of water in other nearby wells in the vicinity of each well that will now have significantly higher volumes of water being pumped by the City in addition to the existing water used by FBUSD for their own purposes. This agreement addresses the instance when FBUSD might be impacted by the City's extraction of groundwater from these wells but it does not address the potentially significant impacts to private water wells that could be impacted by the increased pumping.

I believe this project will have potentially significant impacts on the environment that should be studied and addressed prior to the City proceeding with this plan to extract water from FBUSD's water wells. For example, the proposed Hare Creek Center development project on Todd's Point studied the impact of the project on nearby residential water wells. The City should similarly study the impact of its plan to tap into the local groundwater supplies through the FBUSD wells on existing residential water wells in the vicinity of each FBUSD well that the City proposes to use. I am particularly concerned about the water wells to the east of the high school if a well on the FBUSD's property at the high school is going to be used for this purpose because there are numerous homes to the east of the high school that use private wells to supply their water.

The draft resolution asserts that the project is statutorily exempt from further environmental review under CEQA as a specific action necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency but the resolution does not explain how or why this particular exemption applies to this project. I recognize that it is possible the exemption in section 15269, subdivision (c), applies to this temporary project in a way it would not for a permanent or longer-term project because the City has declared a water emergency but there are specific requirements for when this exemption can apply to a project and the resolution doesn't explain how or if these requirements are met for this proposed project.

I encourage the City to look into this and perhaps add a provision to the agreement that addresses the need to halt the City's extraction of water from FBUSD's wells if there are specific complaints from neighboring property owners or residents and/or if there is evidence that the City's extraction of water is impacting those neighboring wells. Right now, the agreement only addresses the situation if FBUSD's water supply and needs are impacted by the City's extractions but is silent on the other parties that may be impacted. It hardly seems acceptable for the City to tap into local groundwater aquifers that also serve local residential water wells to supplement the City's other water sources if that dramatically increased demand on the groundwater supplies may cause private residential wells that are sourcing water from the same groundwater supplies to run dry or have dramatically reduced flows.

Regards,

--Jacob