

## Proposed Water Commission Comment to General Plan Update EIR NOP

submitted for consideration by Commissioner Ruiz

The City Water Commission has received and reviewed the Plan Santa Barbara-Water Supply Summary dated August 29, 2008 prepared by Water Resources Manager Rebecca Bjork; the comment submitted to the City Council by Commissioner Ruiz entitled General Plan Update-Water Supply dated December 2, 2008; the Water Commission received a report from Community Development staff and Water Resources staff on the General Plan Update EIR at its December 2008 meeting.

The City Charter states in part and in substance that the Water Commission shall act in an advisory capacity to the Council in all matters pertaining to the management and operation of the Water Department and water facilities of the City including development, production, use of water, operation of all dams and water facilities and recommend to the City Council plans, rules and regulations pertaining to the same.

The Water Commission is very interested in the Water Supply section of the General Plan Update EIR and believes it will be a critically important water planning tool for the City at its publication and for the City's future. We hope that the Water Commission will be given the opportunity to be informed on, and have input to the Water Supply section of the document before the Draft EIR is published. At this point we wish to state our comments to the EIR water supply baseline for purposes of the Notice of Preparation.

It will be important to properly assess our anticipated future supply from Gibraltar in light of impacts from the Zaca fire and the initiation of the Pass Through Operations.

When considering long term water supply and land use planning a thorough and conservative assessment of the anticipated future water deliveries from the State Water Project will be important.

It is our position that a water supply from the Desalination Facility should not be considered part of the existing water supply baseline. The Desalination Facility is not currently operational and a considerable expenditure would be required to re-activate the Facility. The City Council has shown no indication that it intends to fund that expenditure now nor anytime in the foreseeable future, absent an emergency, and we agree with that position. A water supply from the Desalination Facility is and most likely through the term of the General Plan Update will be considered a **potential** emergency and severe drought back up supply. It is not and should not be considered in the EIR to be an available supply of water for baseline purposes. The water supply baseline should include a conservative estimate of the City's currently available water supplies and should not include a water supply from the Desalination Facility.