

Montoya, Don

From: Bjork, Rebecca
Sent: Thursday, April 29, 2010 2:12 PM
To: Montoya, Don
Cc: Ferguson, Bill
Subject: FW: Agriculture water rate

Don: Please include this with the Water Commission packet when you put it together next week. It should go with the item for consideration of rate increases.

Thanks,
Rebecca

-----Original Message-----

From: Harriet Sharp [mailto:hsharp3@cox.net]
Sent: Tuesday, April 27, 2010 5:52 PM
To: Schneider, Helene; House, Grant; Williams, Das; White, Harwood "Bendy" A.; Francisco, Dale; Hotchkiss, Frank; Self, Michael
Subject: Agriculture water rate

To Mayor and Members of the City Council

I am an avocado grower (certified organic) on Harbor Hills Drive where I farm a little under an acre. I am concerned that the agriculture water rate is being increased. When the water department budget is presented on Thursday at the Public Works hearing, I request that you discuss and propose changes to the raise.

The present water rate is much higher than any other city or county for agricultural growers. I want to get our rate down so that we are more in parity with neighbors such as Goleta and Carpinteria. Because of water rates, I cannot make a profit or even break even. I believe that the city should be encouraging agriculture instead of that land being developed. Agricultural use of land is of great value to the city and should be encouraged. The revenue from Ag water to the water department is so small that there is no fiscal burden in lowering the rate. I have farmed for 28 years and I remember in the mid 1990s that the Finance committee said we should have parity with Goleta and no restrictive allocation. Why has this never been adhered to?

My second request is that the allocation allowance for water use should be raised or eliminated. My trees are under watered which affects their health and fruit set. There is no reason for an annual allocation and certainly not such an unnecessarily low allotment. The water department doesn't seem to recognize the benefits of agriculture to the city. Please address these concerns and take what action is necessary to get the finance committee to make changes.

Sincerely,
Harriet and Henry Sharp
1165 Harbor Hills Drive
Santa Barbara, CA 93109