

Friday, December 10, 2010

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## Regional Water Board Overreach Could Cost Region Billions

by [Scott Whyte](#), published on December 8, 2010 at 9:03AM

Storyline: Builders Exchange Policy Update

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This Thursday the Central Valley Water Quality Control Board (CVWQCB) will be convening a hearing regarding the newly proposed Wastewater Discharge Permit for the Sacramento Regional Sanitation District (SRSD). The Discharge Permit as currently written would cost the Sanitation District over \$2 Billion to construct new facilities and provide new advanced treatment processes. If the CVWQCB Staff recommendation is approved these costs will be passed down to the local residents of the region and have a severe negative effect on the local economy.

The devastating economic effect it will have on residents and businesses is not in question. Residents would immediately see their monthly sewer rates triple. The already depressed Construction Industry would be burdened with astronomical impact fee increases. For example, a typical restaurant impact fee would increase from \$14,900 to \$70,000 per 1,000 square feet. Construction of a new bar establishment would be an impact fee increase from \$5,250 to \$24,500 per 1,000 square feet. A new dry cleaner impact fee would also increase from \$12,665 to \$59,500 per 1,000 square feet. At the end of the day, the near 400% increase in impact (connection) fees would effectively eliminate almost all construction activity in the region and discourage any business from even thinking of locating here.

What makes this proposal even more ill-advised is that it is not based on proven science. The full removal of ammonia from wastewater has not been proven to be necessary and most of the large metropolitan areas including Los Angeles and San Francisco have the same processes as our local Sanitation district. Why are we being held to a higher standard? Environmental policy should find the appropriate balance between the environment and the economy. The Water Quality Board is also supposedly "required to consider economic factors when establishing water quality standards".

In this instance the cost to the regions residents, businesses, and construction industry is much too burdensome for a scientific experiment that has not been proven necessary. Our Regional Sanitation District has a 99.9% compliance with environmental regulation and has spent over \$20 Million in environmental improvements over the last decade. The District is in compliance with all Federal and State regulation including the "Clean Water Act".

The Sacramento Regional Builders Exchange (SRBX) , a local trade association serving businesses in the commercial construction industry for over a century, stands firmly against implementing this expensive proposal that we view as destructive and contrary to efforts made by local jurisdictions to recruit businesses and increase employment. In a region where the economy is already struggling at 12.4 % unemployment, this proposal will further slow our economic recovery and punish local businesses, residents, and the Building Industry.

STAND WITH US: Elected Officials and members of the public are invited to attend the public hearing Thursday, December 9th, at 8:30 AM. The hearing

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will be held in Rancho Cordova at 11020 Sun Center Drive, #200. SRBX urges all interested parties to attend and testify in opposition as well.

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