

Letters to the Editor

The water's fine

Cam Noltemeyer's "Environmentally Speaking" column in the Oct. 2 edition contained several inaccurate and misleading statements regarding the Santa Clarita Valley's water supply.

In the column, Noltemeyer said she and others have "expressed concern about relying on the polluted Saugus aquifer before facilities to clean up the pollution were operational."

This statement is incorrect and warrants clarification. SCV water suppliers have not relied, and will not rely, on polluted water for use by valley residents and businesses. While the perchlorate contamination associated with the Whittaker-Bermite munitions manufacturing plant caused several wells to be taken out of production, the only groundwater being delivered to customers is from wells not impacted by perchlorate. Furthermore, all water delivered by the four local water retailers meets all state and federal quality standards.

Contrary to what Noltemeyer implies, SCV residents have not received perchlorate-contaminated water and, more importantly, never will.

Noltemeyer fails to point out that, as a result of a multi-million-dollar settlement of litigation by the local water suppliers against the former and current owners of the Whittaker-Bermite site, the Castaic Lake Water Agency is overseeing construction of a treatment facility and associated pipelines near Bouquet Canyon Road and the Santa Clara River that will enable us to rid the contaminated water of perchlorate. These facilities will be fully operational early next year, the timing of which is consistent with supply projections in the SCV Urban Water Management Plan.

Each quarter, the city of Santa Clarita holds a "Whittaker-Bermite Remediation Multi-jurisdictional Task Force" meeting, that is open to the public. Participants include representatives from the city, CLWA, the water retailers, the Department of Toxic Substances Control (the state regulatory agen-

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cy overseeing the site cleanup) and the site's former and current owners. The next meeting is scheduled for 2 p.m., Dec. 10 in the Century Room at City Hall, 23920 Valencia Blvd.

Additionally, Noltemeyer alludes to the need for water supply planning in the face of the ongoing drought. The good news is, CLWA and the retailers have been doing this type of planning for years. It's our job. Contrary to Noltemeyer's claims that we "paint the rosiest of pictures," we continue to update supply projections based on the latest reliable information from the state and expert consultants. Although the current picture is not as "rosy" as it was a few years ago due to an adverse court decision limiting the quantity of water available from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, climate change and other circumstances, these efforts enable us to continue meeting current and projected demands, even in drought years.

Recently, in cooperation with the city and county, CLWA and the local water retailers formed a Drought Committee to not only

promote voluntary conservation, but also to promote cross-agency efforts to establish a permanent water-use ethic to minimize waste of an increasingly valuable resource. The committee meets at 2 p.m. the first Tuesday of every month in the Century Room at City Hall. These meetings are also open to the public.

As a public agency, CLWA strongly encourages public involvement in pursuing its mission of providing the SCV with reliable, quality water at a reasonable cost. In addition to the Multi-jurisdictional Task Force and Drought Committee meetings, the public is also welcome to attend CLWA Board of Directors meetings, held in the evening on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month at the Rio Vista Water Treatment Plant above Central Park, 27234 Bouquet Canyon Road, Saugus. The meeting times and agendas are posted at www.clwa.org. Come hear first-hand how the SCV's water supplies are truly being managed.

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