



League of Women Voters Monterey County

LAFCO Commissioners and Staff
Kate McKenna, Executive Officer
Local Agency Formation Commission of Monterey County
132 West Gabilan Street, Suite 102
Salinas, CA 93901

December 20, 2021

Subject: LAFCO and the MPWMD Application to Activate Latent Powers

The League of Women Voters of Monterey County (LWVMC) supported the Ballot Initiative (Measure J) requiring the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District (MPWMD) to analyze the feasibility of purchasing California American Water Company (Cal Am) and to purchase it if it is found to be feasible. LWVMC support was based on our position that water is a necessary resource for human life and that it is a public resource, not a commodity.

The LWVMC studied ownership of water distribution systems in 2007. The study resulted in several criteria that an entity responsible for managing and distributing water should meet. Based on our evaluation of Cal Am's performance, we concluded that Cal Am has not satisfactorily met these criteria.

We believe that voter approval of Measure J tells you that the majority of the public affected by Measure J wants the process to move forward. We recognize, however, that several Commissioners raised questions at the December 5, 2021, meeting which should be answered factually prior to their casting a vote in January. These questions include: 1) the status of water rates for Chualar and other small systems; 2) the loss of tax revenue by a number of public agencies; 3) the loss of revenue equal to compensation for one firefighter by the Monterey County Regional Fire District.

Please direct staff to get specific answers to these questions and their possible solutions and discuss them further before taking your final vote.

As a side note, a simple Google search of 'lafco, ca, incorporation, voter approval' reveals much. There are numerous citations to LAFCOs that have required voter approval prior to considering incorporation. The pattern is clear--- reliance on voter approval as a standard measure of local application and support. The League believes that principle applies here.

Respectfully,

Marianne Gawain
President

CC: Monterey Peninsula Water Management District, Attn: Dave Stoldt

