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Subject: FW: Public Comment: Item 2.4 - In Support of Advisory Committee Reforms and Procedural Integrity
Date: Wednesday, June 11, 2025 4:27:00 PM

Good afternoon,

I hope you're having a good day thus far, please see comment letter received.

Thank you & have a great evening,



Eva Gonzales, Senior Secretary – Confidential
Monterey County Water Resources Agency
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From: Bill Lipe <william.o.lipe@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 11, 2025 3:28 PM
To: Clerks <clerk@svbgsa.org>
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Subject: Public Comment: Item 2.4 - In Support of Advisory Committee Reforms and Procedural Integrity

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Please forward to the Directors. As always, thank you!

To the Board of Directors

Re: Public Comment in Support of Advisory Committee Reforms and Procedural Integrity

Chair Cremers and Members of the Board,

I write in full support of the proposed amendments to the Advisory Committee structure, particularly the clearer process surrounding appointments — including the addition of publicly accessible, merit-based at-large seats.

I can personally attest that the last round of Advisory Committee appointments — specifically to the 180-400 Subbasin Implementation Committee — was a disheartening process. It was,

frankly, confusing and frustrating to witness. Publicly posted deadlines were sidestepped without explanation. One applicant, Greg Scattini — a coastal grower and chair of the Salinas Basin Water Alliance — was allowed to submit his application after the published deadline. That application was sparse, with at least one question answered by copy-pasting another. You can confirm this in the record. And yet, he was seated.

This might seem a small procedural detail, but it matters. Trust in this process begins with the basics — honoring deadlines, respecting public notice, and applying standards equally.

As it stands, it appears that **six of thirteen members** on the 180-400 committee are either employees of members, members or on the board of directors of the Salinas Basin Water Alliance. That concentration of affiliation doesn't just reflect an imbalance of perspective — it anchors the conversation to a narrow corridor of influence at the very moment when this agency is charged with solving groundwater overdraft and seawater intrusion. That's not a healthy democratic mix. That's consolidation.

I raise this not to question individuals, but to question systems. I've seen — directly — how decisions get made when applications are weighed not by what's written, but by who's writing. I've seen qualified, committed people discarded because they didn't fit someone's internal narrative or political comfort zone. That's not how public appointments are supposed to work.

So here's the ask: **weigh applications by merit**, not by grudge, or history, or faction. And when you cast votes for appointments, do so as public servants, not gatekeepers. The revised Advisory Committee structure gives you a chance to do this better. It introduces equity where there's been imbalance, transparency where there's been doubt, and clarity where ambiguity has covered for favoritism.

I want to be clear: I don't write this out of spite or animosity. Life's too short for that nonsense. I write it because I've walked this path — as a former board member and now as a member of the public. And I still care deeply about the health of this agency, the water we all depend on, and the integrity of the process that's supposed to protect it.

To staff — especially Piret and the team — thank you for your work in shaping a more defensible, inclusive framework. It's overdue, and appreciated. To the Board: may you use it wisely, and honor it with the fairness it was built to ensure.

Respectfully,
Bill Lipe
Former Upper Valley SVBGSA Board Member
Salinas, 93908