



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

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Telephone (707) 476-2390 Fax (707) 445-7299

Dear Trinidad City Council and residents: January 24th, 2021

Locally, we are all very concerned about water supplies and water resiliency for the greater Trinidad area. The recent drought has brought that point home and improving our water supplies is critical to our health and safety. Everyone would probably agree with that. **The question is how do we do that?**

There are two general pathways to proceed. One path works to live within the means of our local watersheds to provide water and does not have a “growth inducing element”. The other path involves bringing water in from outside our watersheds (HBMWD-Mad River water) and has a “growth inducing element”.

Either path will take years if not decades to implement and so no matter what path the community decides to follow, if we begin now to implement the local water supply enhancement and resiliency project, we will be all that much better off.

The “**local sustainable path**” focuses on fixing leaks in our existing distribution systems; increasing rainwater collection and hard tank storage all over the community; installing rainwater collection groundwater recharge facilities throughout the headwaters; and tapping gravity flow distributed springs that reduce disinfection byproducts; These improvements could more than quadruple our exiting storage, while also improving water quality. With a distributed storage approach our reliability will increase and fire-fighting safety as well.

The other path, a regional approach involves bringing a pipeline from the Mad River to our area. While there is lots of excess water available



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from their current water right, that is untreated water that the pulp mills used. Treated water is not in large excess supply and the district needs to evaluate the future demand needs of their existing customers like Arcata and Eureka before offering new contracts.

This approach also comes with growth inducement. One of the reasons that the Trinidad area is such a desirable place to live is because it is not over developed like so many other places, especially coastal towns. Limited sewer and water, geology and geography have constrained development.

Unlimited water can double densities in our local area. One example of this is a subdivision proposed along Stage Coach Road just outside town, just a few years ago. It was proposed as an 18 acre-18 parcel subdivision. Every 1 acre parcel would have had a well and a septic system potentially polluting each others wells. The development was reduced to 9-two acre parcels. With water the density could have doubled.

Increased growth means increased crowds in town and at beaches and on trails. Imagine the kinds of crowds we saw this summer being here all year long and even bigger in the summer. Our community is at a critical juncture in deciding what kind of community we want in the future.

We either hold the ground on slow careful development or throw that to the wind and remove one of two major barriers to growth. A recently developed Municipal Service Review by LAFCO does not consider any of this growth potential and its impacts. There are major LAFCO issues with this pipeline extension proposal and there would be many hearings, along with major permitting hurdles, CEQA, being in the Coastal Zone,



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with major wetlands and more.

The question here is not does the City want to study this alternate or not. The question is does the city want to hold on to its character and the qualities that attracted us all here or not.

If the city wants to hold onto its special qualities than reject this study. It has already been studied before. The only thing that changes are that the estimates go up from \$1.9 million in 2001, to \$5 million in 2008, and with the increased costs of materials, construction, and permitting over the past 13 years, costs could be as much as \$10-20 million dollars now. Even if Westhaven, Trinidad, and the Rancheria all participated, the costs to do this project and maintain the backup Luffenholtz system would more than likely raise rates for customers.

Lets double down on all of the sustainable water supply actions we can take. There are many grant programs out there to help the city and area residents implement these practices. These efforts actually have the potential to lower rates in the future. Lets get started now.

As always, I offer my free assistance with any of these stewardship efforts that you want to implement.

Sincerely, Steve Madrone, 5th District Supervisor