



HUMBOLDT BAY MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT

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January 29, 2018

Humboldt County Board of Supervisors

825 5th Street

Eureka, CA 95501

Dear Supervisors,

Our District has had and continues to have a good working relationship with the Board of Supervisors. It is in this spirit of communication and transparency that we are sending this letter. At the January 11, 2018 Planning Commission meeting, the commission voted 3-2 to recommend a re-zoning request for Mercer Fraser property APN 504-161-010 and a special use permit for a 5,000 square foot cannabis extraction manufacturing facility to be sent to the Board of Supervisors for final approval.

Our Board has several concerns about this. One is the lack of notification by the Planning Department for a development project that is proposed on a parcel adjacent to two of our Ranney Collector wells on the Mad River. Our District learned about this project via a public notice that was published in the newspaper less than two weeks prior to a Planning Commission hearing. During the Commission's hearing, County staff admitted that there was no agency referral sent to our District. See the attached aerial photo of the project location in relation to our operations on the Mad River.

The District supplies domestic water to seven municipal agencies on a wholesale basis. The municipalities served by the District are the Cities of Arcata, Blue Lake and Eureka, and the Fieldbrook, Humboldt, Manila and McKinleyville Community Services Districts. Via our wholesale relationship, the District serves water to an estimated population of 88,000 people (approximately 66% of the entire Humboldt County), and to numerous businesses, industries and educational institutions, including the vast number of tourists that visit Humboldt County and consume water in restaurants, motels, etc. located within those municipalities. In addition, the District's diversion works and operational control center are located at Essex, just northeast of Arcata on the Mad River and immediately downstream of the Applicant's parcel.

Four Ranney collectors (Stations, Pump Stations, or PS), supply water to the domestic system for drinking water purposes. The Ranney collectors house multiple large electric-driven pumps and associated equipment, and are capable of pumping approximately 20 MGD. The collectors draw water from the aquifer via lateral pipes located 60 to 90 feet beneath the bed of the river. The process of bringing water up from the aquifer through the sands and gravel of the riverbed provides a natural filtration process which results in water that is very high in quality. Two of our Ranney collectors, Station 2 to the west and Station 3 to the east, are located on adjacent parcels (APN 516-27-105 and APN 504-15-110 respectively)

to the Applicant's parcel. See the attached aerial photo that depicts the proximity of our Ranney collectors to the proposed cannabis extraction manufacturing project.

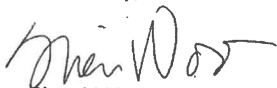
Consequently, ANY contamination originating from the Applicant's parcel would immediately impact up to 3 (75%) of our domestic water supply sources and our industrial surface water source (PS#6 on the aerial photo).

Although we are appealing the Planning Commission's decision to you, the District is also working with Mercer Fraser to see if we can arrive at mutually agreeable mitigation factors to add using the Q layer zoning overlay, should the heavy industrial zoning change be approved. We have also offered to purchase the parcel, or an easement that would allow continued gravel extraction but prohibit any other use.

Manufacturing accidents generally occur due to both engineering and human errors. Engineered mitigations added to the Q zoning overlay may add some degree of assurance against drinking water contamination. But human error, including lack of compliance with operations manuals and/or lack of enforcement and oversight, adds to the risks of manufacturing accidents. We have learned that Mercer Fraser will not be operating the cannabis extraction manufacturing facility but will instead be leasing it out; therefore, Mercer Fraser will not be in direct control of its operations. This too adds another layer of concern for us.

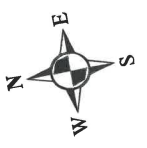
Given the location of the project site and the geology underlying it as part of the Mad River aquifer structure, the Directors of the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District believe that it is NOT in the interest of public health and safety to change the zoning on this parcel to heavy industrial, which would allow increased industrial activities directly over our environmentally sensitive drinking water source that serves the majority of Humboldt County residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sheri Woo", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Sheri Woo

Board President



Mercer Fraser APN Map 2018

155' Buffer Zone 
 Distance from PS #2:
 PS #1: 1570'
 PS #6: 1978'