

Grace Rickard
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May 17, 2019

County of San Diego
Planning & Development Services
C/O: Jim Bennet
5510 Overland Avenue, Suite 310
San Diego, CA 92123

Ref: Groundwater Sustainability Plan
Borrego Valley Groundwater Basin
Borrego Springs Sub-basin

Dear Mr. Bennett;

We have a problem that needs your immediate attention. It's the water.

We are in dire need of a solution to our "critical overdraft" situation. You will learn quickly, if you don't already know, that agriculture, specifically, the Farmers, are depleting our aquifer at an unsustainable rate by irrigating their non-native citrus and palm orchards. They consume over 70% of the aquifer.

We, the ratepaying residents and businesses consume only 10%. Both residents and businesses have reduced consumption, in good faith, while the farmers have continued to install larger irrigation pipes and drill deeper down, thereby increasing their consumption. They are taking the amount that we have earnestly tried to preserve.

Agriculture was established in Borrego Springs before the town. They own the rights to the water. The town has grown as the agriculture has grown. There are now more people than orchards. People are more important than grapefruits.

Borrego Springs is a dazzling gem in this desert. We are a community of artists, anthropologists, archeologists, astronomers, paleontologists, naturalists, botanists, hikers, bikers, outdoor enthusiasts, all inspired by the endless wonder this desert provides.

Please consider deeply and act swiftly to find a solution to keep us from becoming a deserted dried up desert ghost town. There is too much to lose.

Finally, BPAs are arguably one of the most important elements in the implementation process: witness the ongoing battle among stakeholders to establish the highest BPA possible. For reasons unclear to us, the ratepayers, the timeframe set out in the GSP – 2010 to the end of 2014 – is certainly the worst possible interval for BWD. BWD began reducing its usage in 2003, when it pumped 3926 AF. In 2010, BWD pumped 2730.50 AF, and since then it has continued to responsibly reduce its water usage such that currently it pumps 1700.

During this same period of water reductions by BWD, water storage in the basin was reduced by approximately 160,000 AF. These figures are a clear indicator that the parties responsible for the overdraft were pumpers other than BWD: 70% due to farming, 20% due to recreation/golf courses. Thus, choosing 2010-2015 as the baseline years to determine BPAs is clearly to the detriment of the ratepayer, and unquestionably favors farmers first, and golf courses next.

This is patently unfair, arbitrary and in the big picture, manipulative and probably illicit.

Sincerely,
Grace Rickard



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