



Protecting Marin Since 1934

February 27, 2019

Board of Directors
Marin Municipal Water District
220 Nellen Avenue
Corte Madera, CA 94925

President Bragman and Members of the Board:

Marin Conservation League (MCL) urges the district board to comprehensively address the full range of watershed needs: vegetation stewardship, enforcement, trail maintenance, forest resiliency, and fire protection through sustained funding approaches. We recommend that additional funding be made available to restore the deputy sheriff position and fund other needs that have been eliminated from the proposed budget. MCL concurs with the Citizen Advisory Panel's finding that states: a healthy and resilient watershed and infrastructure is central to MMWD's ability to collect and store water.

That said, MCL is concerned that the District's FY 2020 and 2021 draft budget proposal is a step backward for the watershed. It does not demonstrate sufficient investment at a time when there is the opportunity and the overwhelming need to do so, and when other water districts in the Bay Area and state are implementing higher levels of investments to address watershed needs. MMWD is falling short of its responsibilities to address the true fiscal needs of the District and meet the Board's own policies.

MMWD's strategy of backfilling current gaps for needed fire prevention, healthy forest stewardship, fish passage and trail maintenance in the proposed FY 2019-2021 budget through a variety of grants is not yet a secure funding source. MCL urges the MMWD to restore funding for these proposed budget reductions. To offset another budget reduction, MMWD is proposing utilizing in house and other resources to perform the Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan. This is a creative approach to perform this critical need.

MCL strongly supports adequate ranger and deputy sheriff staffing to ensure that MMWD's watershed is protected from misuse, damage, and for visitor safety, enjoyment, and the ability to respond to emergency situations with minimal delay. The proposed budget eliminates one of two sheriff deputies. Enforcement capacity (six rangers and two deputy sheriffs) is already challenged, and further reductions are unacceptable. We urge you find a way to continue to fund the second sheriff position.

Another proposed budget reduction is the elimination of the Watershed User Survey. Funding for this survey should be restored as soon as possible, and would help to inform the District of changes in the number and types of visitors. This survey could also support the consideration of some type of visitor fee revenue to help offset maintenance needs created by recreation.

In summary, MCL supports the full funding of the MMWD Watershed – it is the most important asset of the MMWD and must be protected and maintained.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda J. Novy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the "y".

Linda J. Novy
President

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