



CITY OF EL PASO DE ROBLES
“The Pass of the Oaks”

May 23, 2023

VIA EMAIL: ADMIN@SSJWD.ORG

Steve Sinton, Director
Matt Turrentine, Director
Shandon-San Juan Water District
P.O. Box 150
Shandon, CA 93461

RE: NACIMIENTO PIPELINE CAPACITY

Dear Mr. Sinton and Mr. Turrentine,

This letter provides the City of El Paso de Robles’ (“Paso Robles”) response to the Shandon-San Juan Water District’s (“SSJWD”) proposal and application to appropriate and transport water to the Paso Robles Area Groundwater Basin using the existing Nacimiento Water Project Pipeline (“Nacimiento Pipeline”), a publicly-funded, \$176 million, 45-mile pipeline from Lake Nacimiento to San Luis Obispo. The application is premised on (1) the erroneous claim that excess capacity exists in the Nacimiento Pipeline and (2) the speculative assumption that SSJWD will obtain a permit to appropriate water supplies from the Salinas and Nacimiento Rivers based on that erroneous claim.

Paso Robles, a Nacimiento Pipeline project participant along with Templeton Community Services District, Atascadero Mutual Water Company, and the City of San Luis Obispo (collectively, “Project Participants”), opposes SSJWD’s plan and application because *there is no excess capacity in the Nacimiento Pipeline* available to SSJWD. Further, SSJWD did not vet the concept of utilizing the Nacimiento Pipeline or collaborate with the Project Participants and has thus failed to be transparent with the public.

The Nacimiento Pipeline was designed and constructed to convey only the water entitlements held by the Project Participants. That existing water entitlements are not being fully utilized at present does not mean that there is excess capacity in the Nacimiento Pipeline. Each Project Participant has developed a plan for utilizing its respective entitlement. Utilization of those entitlements is expected to increase significantly in the coming years to satisfy urban growth in lieu of utilizing other surface and groundwater supplies.

Additionally, Project Participants are developing a turn-back sales program that will allow Project Participants to sell any unused water entitlements for other beneficial uses. The turn-back sales program is essential for offsetting Nacimiento Pipeline costs to the Project

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Participants' rate payers. When the turn-back sales program is fully utilized, there will be no excess capacity in the Nacimiento Pipeline. A recent order by the State Water Resources Control Board allowing the Project Participants to use their Nacimiento water entitlements as they see fit throughout San Luis Obispo County will further facilitate and accelerate the turn-back sales program. Thus, any claim by SSJWD to use the Nacimiento Pipeline would be in direct conflict with the Project Participants' full utilization of the Nacimiento Pipeline, to the detriment of their rate payers.

Project Participants designed the Nacimiento Pipeline for their intended uses, have planned for maximizing its benefit, and continue to pay for its construction, operation, and maintenance. SSJWD applied to appropriate Lake Nacimiento water assuming use of the Nacimiento Pipeline without first reviewing the concept with Project Participants. This raises serious concerns over credibility and is cause for doubt that SSJWD could be a trusted partner. Paso Robles respectfully requests that SSJWD withdraw any and all applications before the State Water Resources Control Board that rely upon access to the Nacimiento Pipeline because such access is not and will not be available to SSJWD.

Sincerely,



Christopher Alakel, P.E.
Utilities Director

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