

**NEWS**

# Marina Mayor Bruce Delgado: When it comes to water, be a good neighbor

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By Bruce Delgado

Marina mayor

Imagine your neighbors deciding to pave part of your attractive front yard to make a car port for their RV — right on the spot you just restored for a new garden. You would immediately ask: why don't you use your own yard rather than mine?

Good neighbors are considerate, cooperative, and work together for the benefit of the entire neighborhood, and they consider their neighbor's point of view. Those basic tenets also apply to neighboring cities.

But that neighborly spirit is nowhere to be found when it comes to the Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project, which includes a massive desalination plant in, around and through Marina.

As a good neighbor, Marina supports efforts to secure an adequate regional water supply and we are working closely with the Marina Coast Water District in calling for new supplies, such as expansion of the Pure Water Monterey recycled water project. And we support an appropriately-sized and environmentally-safe regional desalination project. That's our commitment to the neighboring cities and the people in the region.



But, we are disappointed with the recently-issued and inadequate Environmental Impact Report/Statement (EIR/EIS) on the proposed project. The document fails to adequately evaluate the harmful impacts to Marina — it disregards our serious concerns related to groundwater depletion, saltwater intrusion, damage to the coastal ecosystem and more. We call on other cities to carefully consider how this project would significantly harm Marina, and look instead toward other more environmentally-responsible and sustainable alternatives. Any city government bears the responsibility to do what we are doing: looking out for the long-term interests of our residents and ensuring that new industrial projects are not approved if they pose serious, unnecessary risks.

Our priorities are simple, and should be shared by all of our neighboring cities:

**Conservation.** The EIR/EIS dismisses a critical report by Stanford researchers that illustrates how slant well drilling on Marina's coast could threaten the city's groundwater supply. The EIR/EIS also fails to account for the fact that the state has designated the basin underlying the slant well site as critically over-drafted, which triggers a special process to protect further groundwater harm and restore supplies. Given these facts, how does it make sense that the amount and integrity of a local water supply could be jeopardized further by a huge industrial water project (extracting up to 24 million gallons of water per day) to export that water elsewhere?

**Fairness.** The EIR/EIS also fails to properly consider the adverse impact of the project on the Marina community, in stark contrast to the region's stated commitment to environmental justice and fairness. If, as the EIR/EIS states, the impacts to Marina are not significant, then why doesn't another city that would actually receive water from the project offer to host the project wells? Rather than dictating Marina's land use decisions, why not find a location that the entire region can support?

**Environmental Protection.** Marina worked hard to rid our coastline of an environmentally-damaging sand mining plant. However, the new desalination slant wells would be located in that exact site, but the EIR/EIS fails to acknowledge the significance of undermining our long-term efforts to restore that land for the benefit of wildlife and residents.

Being a good neighbor is more than a slogan. It requires people and cities to put themselves in each others' shoes and ask if they would be OK with the decision if it was their front yard. Most neighbors would not plan to park their RV in a neighbor's yard without the neighbor's agreement — similarly, Monterey Peninsula cities shouldn't dismiss our concerns or allow Cal Am to locate their industrial operations on Marina's coastline without our agreement based on a legally adequate EIR/EIS.



We are committed to finding a long term, regional water supply solution, but we know there are better options available. We urge our neighbors to take a closer look.

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