

Mono County Board of Supervisors
VIA EMAIL

August 7, 2018

Dear Supervisors,

I am writing regarding today's agenda item on LADWP's water practices in Long Valley. I had planned to attend the meeting but am unable to do so.

I have followed this issue with interest. I worked at the Mono Lake Committee from 1984-1996 and was deeply involved in key policy issues including the State Water Board's 1994 decision to protect Mono Lake from excessive diversions by LADWP. Because of my familiarity dealing with LADWP at Mono Lake, LADWP's unilateral action in Long Valley last spring was alarming to me.

I am very concerned about how Mono County responds to LADWP now, and the implications for DWP's future engagement in Mono County – not just in Long Valley but also at Mono Lake, Owens Gorge and all of LADWP's water holdings in Mono County (including as yet untapped reserves of groundwater).

I think it's very important for Mono County to stand up to LADWP at this time and send a strong message that the County will step up to protect waters in their area of origin, recognizing LADWP's water rights.

I am glad LADWP has already agreed to conduct a CEQA analysis and do an EIR, and they should be recognized for taking this first step. However, I believe Mono County needs to hold LA's feet to the fire on this so that it gets done properly and this fight doesn't drag on for years. My experience from working at MLC is that LADWP never agreed to come to the table unless and until the agency was sued; only then was it possible to negotiate any agreements.

I think Mono County should file for a restraining order to 1) compel DWP to keep an appropriate amount of water in Long Valley that will preserve baseline

conditions until it has completed the CEQA analysis, and 2) agree on a timetable for initiation and completion of the EIR in a timely manner.

Mono County should also support the use of the best available science based on solid data and peer-reviewed sources. In recent weeks, some statements and/or conclusions have been made (including by LADWP) in various articles and letters about sage grouse, grazing, irrigation, fisheries, economics, climate change and the like that appear to be unsupported by facts and data. LADWP has abundantly more resources than does Mono County and therefore it's essential that the County rely from the start on solid scientific information rather than hearsay in making its case, lest Mono County squander taxpayer dollars by making unsupported arguments that can easily be dismissed by LADWP's experts.

Ultimately, I would like to see Mono County do what has been done in Inyo County – that is, enter into some type of County long-term water agreement with LADWP that will protect the environment of Mono County while also recognizing LADWP's water needs.

In this era of climate change it is no longer business as usual. Everyone is going to have to learn to live with less. LADWP is right to be concerned about climate change and its effects on water supply, and the City of Los Angeles & LADWP have already done a lot to try to address climate change and water supply. Perhaps they can do more. Perhaps ranchers can increase irrigation efficiency and learn to live with less. Perhaps we who love those pastoral vistas need to realize that the meadows can't remain green all summer long as they always have been. Regardless of these competing demands, the protection of Mono County's environment (including but not limited to the habitat needs of the bi-state sage grouse) needs to be part of the balancing of water demands and uses, just as it was at Mono Lake.

Thank you very much for being willing to engage in this important issue. How Mono County acts today will set a standard for the County's future engagement in possible water disputes with LADWP at Mono Lake, in the Owens Gorge and elsewhere in Mono and Inyo counties.

Sincerely,

Sally Miller

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