

**Almonte District Improvement Club
105 Wisteria Way
Mill Valley, CA 94941**

October 27, 2009

Marin Municipal Water District
220 Nellen Avenue
Corte Madera, CA 94925
Attention: Director Cynthia Koehler

Dear Cynthia Koehler,

Thank you very much for meeting with various community leaders of the Mill Valley area last night. We truly appreciate the time you gave to listening to our concerns.

It seemed you are interested in learning more about the potential health risks associated with the operation of a desalination plant. I have enclosed an article entitled; "Pharmaceuticals flowing into the Bay, hazards unknown".

The article states the following: 1) The quantity and diversity of pharmaceuticals in the Bay is unknown; 2) There is a growing concern among scientists that more research is needed to assess the health effects of the Bay's accumulating body of pharmaceuticals; 3) No Bay Area wastewater treatment plant is required to screen for a single drug compound or treat sewage to prevent their discharge and they end up in the Bay after flowing down the drain or being flushed down the toilet. The Environmental Protective Agency (EPA) is developing new methods to test for pharmaceuticals in wastewater, but will not ask regional water regulators to impose limits on any of them until it also begins to study their effects; 4) There is no reliable way of testing for the hundreds of drug compounds on the market and more are being developed every day.

The article only speaks about pharmaceuticals. In addition, it is recognized that there are hundreds more toxic chemicals and compounds, pathogenic microorganisms, and emerging contaminants in the Bay, which have potential health risks and are unregulated.

According to Dr. Larry Rose's analysis, various causes of operational failures have been documented in many articles about the existing worldwide desalination plants in peer reviewed engineering articles. Consequently, it seems likely that a Marin Desal Plant would also fail at some point in time and perhaps repeatedly (similar to our sewage treatment plants).

Given the above information, it is clear that potential contamination of post treatment water from the proposed Desal Plant is a real concern and threat to the health of Marin residents. The ****“precautionary principle”** dictates that a Marin Desal Plant should not be considered until extensive studies have been conducted which prove utmost safety without doubt and new protective EPA regulations have been adopted.

*[**The **precautionary principle** is a moral and political principle, which states that if an action or policy might cause severe or irreversible harm to the public or to the environment, in the absence of a scientific consensus that harm would not ensue, the burden of proof falls on those who would advocate taking the action. The principle implies that there is a responsibility to intervene and protect the public from exposure to harm where scientific investigation discovers a plausible risk in the course of having screened for other suspected causes. The protections that mitigate suspected risks can be relaxed only if further scientific findings emerge that more robustly support an alternative explanation.]*

Please protect us from harm. We strongly urge you to take the potential health risks of the proposed Marin Desal Plant seriously and deny any further movement toward developing the plant.

Thank you again for your kind consideration.

Very truly yours,

Sharon Rushton
President
Almonte District Improvement Club