

SACRAMENTO VALLEY GROUND WATER AT RISK AFTER WATER SELLERS SCORE VICTORY

Chico, CA – The Butte County Board of Supervisors unanimously adopted the Sacramento Valley Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (Plan) on May 8, 2007. The county will now receive \$2.8 million for two production wells to provide the cover of “research” that will very likely result in water sales. The Supervisors could not conceive that they are participating in the demise of their own region.

For the full press release please visit: www.becnet.org

On behalf of BEC’s 850 members and others in Butte County who want to keep our ground water local, BEC attended the May 8th hearing. Here are some quotes in local media from BEC's representatives.

Butte Environmental Council executive director Barbara Vlamis provided a petition of 300 signatures, which she said were collected in a few hours, opposing the move to opt into the regional plan. She said she felt Butte County was coerced into the plan with the lure of research dollars. Vlamis said she understood the idea behind regional water control, but that the "danger is in the details." Enterprise Record, May 9, 2007

To the Butte Environmental Council, however, the plan was a con job engineered by powerful water interests seeking to hook the county's groundwater into the state water system to gain more control over it. "We all know that the meal being served at this table is the future of our groundwater," Jim Brobeck, water policy analyst for BEC, told the supervisors. "Special interests in position to market water are carving up the Tuscan like a turkey, while groundwater-dependent farmers and households will be allowed to mill around the edges fighting over scraps." Chico News and Review, May 10, 2007

BEC is determined not to give up and we believe that this is only the beginning of a long-term challenge. Do you want to expand BEC's ability to protect your water? If you become a BEC monthly or quarterly Angel or are able to increase your current pledge, this level of activity and education can continue and expand to meet the escalating threats from water transfers. You may become a monthly or quarterly Angel by credit card or check online at <http://www.becnet.org/nodes/giving/angel.htm> or through automatic fund transfers by using the attached form with a canceled check. This provides BEC with steady income urgently needed to keep up the task of protecting our ground water. It also cuts down on time spent on fundraising, so we can do the work that you value the most: protecting our remaining wildlands, air, and water.

Barbara
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WATER FACTS

- The vast majority (87%) of Butte County residents depend on ground water for their drinking water
- The Tuscan Formation aquifer holds approximately 30 million acre feet (AF) of water (an acre foot is 325,900 gallons of water).
- Los Angeles' Metropolitan Water District is looking for 300,000 AF from the Sacramento Valley by 2010 and 550,000 AF by 2020.
- Glenn Colusa Irrigation District and its partners have been funded to explore selling ground water from the aquifer.
- In 1994, 105,000 acre-feet of water were sold from Butte County. Individual wells ran dry, one Durham community well was forced to close, hoses ran between neighbors' houses for water emergencies, people unwittingly drank horrendous pollution before their wells dried up, and one family lost part of their farm from the impacts.
- At the present time, there is no real protection for Butte County's ground water
- The San Joaquin River is already dewatered in its upper reaches from excess water consumption and a significant portion of the San Joaquin ground water basin has been subsiding.
- The amount of energy currently devoted to pumping water over the Tehachapi mountain range from northern to southern California is equal to one third of the entire household energy use of southern California