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October 31, 2022

Monterey County Housing and Community Development
c/o Erik V. Lundquist, AICP, Director
1441 Schilling Place, South 2nd Floor
Salinas, CA. 93901-4527
Email: lundquist@co.monterey.ca.us

Carmel Unincorporated/Highlands Land Use Advisory Committee
c/o John Borelli, Chair
73 Fern Canyon Road
Carmel, CA. 93923
Email: JohnJBorelli@gmail.com

Carmel Area Wastewater District
c/o Daryl Lauer, Collections Superintendent
3945 Rio Road
Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA. 93922
Email: lauer@cawd.org

**Re: Carmel Area Wastewater District
File No. PLN220055**

Dear Mr. Lundquist, Mr. Borelli, and Mr. Lauer:

Thank you for this opportunity to express my appreciation of CAWD's efforts to offer us a state-of-the-art sewage system. However, while I appreciate the efforts, I am not convinced that the option chosen for replacement is the best one. Therefore, in addition to the contents of the letter of October 31, 2022, signed by Carmel Meadows neighbors, I would like to add some points not mentioned.

I will preface my comments below that I want to make clear that I do not object to the replacement or lack appreciation to the extent of maintenance that needs to be completed to make our sewage system safe, sustainable, and efficient in operation as well as considering the costs. There is a spectrum of considerations from lasting major maintenance and repairs on one end to full technologically innovative potential for a new state-of-the-art sewage system. For myself, I am for a balance on that spectrum.

If, as mentioned at the last meeting, failure of the system is imminent because of its aging infrastructure, then I would suggest it be shored up as soon as possible so that we can approach

the problem in a practical manner. If the system fails, why wasn't the problem addressed well before it came to the point of failure? Why were residents of Carmel Meadows not given options well before imminent failure was even mentioned? The liability, it would seem, would be on CAWD.

That said, I am also in complete agreement with the points made in the above-mentioned letter and have added my signature to it. I must say that I don't understand why CAWD has chosen such an expensive, intrusive, and intensive option to the maintenance/replacement of the Carmel Meadows sewage system. I wish that this proposal would have been more considerate of residents' daily lives when work is underway. I am also very distressed over the intrusion into resident properties (including mine) and the maintenance responsibilities that will be required by a few. These responsibilities should be with the utility company (CAWD) and not the users of those utilities beyond their own dedicated lines. We don't maintain P G & E power poles, or the phone companies' equipment, and select individuals should not be required to maintain the community's sewage system.

Additionally, this project, as proposed, would seriously disrupt the traffic flow of Ribera Road. Besides the residents' comings and goings, and even without this project, there are very few days at any given time in which construction workers, gardeners, maintenance professionals, and delivery trucks are not routinely driving, parking, and working in Carmel Meadows. Ribera Road is also a beach and trailhead access area. Tourist traffic ebbs and flows here as well. A 6-week to 3-month disruption of the current traffic situation will be incredibly disruptive.

Consider the Impact: Carmel Meadows is enjoyed by residents as a place of peace and quiet, consideration for others, and for the enjoyment of the incredibly beautiful environment that surrounds us. It seems that this particular project "Alternative 3: New Lift Station and Force Main" will disrupt lives in many ways.

1. The short-term disruption might be tolerated to a degree; however, the permanent installation of grinder pumps and sewage lines in residents' backyards, with the requirement that they maintain them has the potential to lower property values and destroy the whole reason people desire to live in this neighborhood. Additionally, installing equipment that obscures the general environment enjoyed by residents (i.e., the Lift Station structure in Mariposa Court), or makes noise (pumps and grinders), or has the potential to cause foul odors near our homes will have the same general affect (who wants to buy a new responsibility when looking for a retirement home, a family home, or any number of other reasons for buying a new home)? It is unreasonable to expect residents to maintain any part of a sewage system other than that part which joins and serves their house only.
2. **Staging Area will be a nuisance:** The proposed staging area is a privately owned downhill-sloped lot that is currently covered with green and healthy ice plant. It is across Ribera Road from Mariposa Court. Trucks will be crossing back and forth in an area where traffic is most frequent. The very thought of this spot being used daily by trucks and large equipment will cause 8 hours of noise, mud and/or dust, potential debris flow and erosion onto the streets, destruction of critter habitat (from ants and

- spiders to quail and rabbits, etc.) who may decide to take up residence in or nearer to our homes. Vehicles will be tracking debris back and forth and across Ribera to Mariposa Court. In the meantime, residents, workers, and tourists will be making efforts to come and go from their driveways or parking spots and crossing the Staging location constantly during the day. The scar that will be left when the work is complete will be an unacceptable eyesore at the least, and an environmental disaster at its worst.
3. **"Minimal Excavation"** – The proposed trench for affected backyards is 3-feet wide by 3-5 feet deep where the relocated and larger 8" pipe is to be installed, and for four residents the additional installation of grinder pumps. Tearing up our backyards and landscaping, even with the promise of full replacement "as it was before" nevertheless will potentially create breaks or obstruct landscape irrigation lines, destruction of fences, landscape & hardscape, disruption of owners' current or planned projects, potential unintended damage, and a general angst of uncertainty. Additionally, those residents with pets will have to have alternatives to their pets' care and supervision during workdays. These points seem unreasonable on many levels; and why would CAWD want these added costs and potential problems when the existing location of the sewer pipe obstructs no one's private property?
 4. **Timing is Important** – Carmel Meadows is used by tourists using the trailheads of Carmel River State Park, part time owners, and vacation renters. Several times during the year traffic on Ribera Road ebbs and flows because of summer vacations, long holidays, and local events such as Car Week, Jazz Festival, golf tournaments, Laguna Seca events, etc. To add this project's activities to Ribera Road traffic during these times would also be a huge disruption. With increased activities also come emergencies – accidents at Highway 1 and Ribera Road, obstructed routes to the trailheads, and resident emergencies: Our first responders must have access to all crises.
 5. **Isn't this one of the most expensive of the proposals?** As mentioned in the Carmel Meadows Neighbors letter of October 31, the "Alternative 2" proposal seems much more cost effective and practical. "Removal & Replacement of Pipe in Place" was, according to the letter, recommended in the Final Technical Memorandum. The current project, "Alternative 3: New Lift Station and Force Main" might be state-of-the-art, but at what cost? Some costs are unknown as mentioned above in #3. It also includes adding extra costs to homeowners for the care and maintenance of grinder pumps and sewage pipes – why should they bear the brunt of those incurred expenses? It also includes the obstruction of view with the not so unobtrusive Lift Station sitting in Mariposa Court. It includes possible foul odors and malfunctions of machinery.

In conclusion, I believe that, at the very least, the current proposal could be amended to offer better options so that destruction of residents' properties can be avoided. While the technical engineering and technology of the proposed project are impressive, upon closer scrutiny of its impact, I respectfully request that CAWD choose a more practical, cost effective, environmental, AND neighborhood-friendly alternative to the current proposal.

Thank you for listening.

Respectfully,
Karen M. B. Helton

