

April 5, 2023

Commissioners,

I urge you to support **with conditions** the two-year extension requested by the Los Olivos Community Services District (LOCSD). The conditions I recommend to facilitate the Proposition 218 vote and to increase community wide support for a wastewater treatment plan include:

1. Expanding the study of wastewater treatment options, including potable water reuse, and fund further cost studies,
2. Moving to bi-monthly meetings and increasing public participation through the creation of a public committee focused on new wastewater treatment and potable water reuse options,
3. Significantly increasing outreach to and participation by residents through holding additional workshops and well-designed mailed surveys,
4. Expanding the property site list to include sites outside the LOCSD and across HWY 154 and re-evaluating site requirements to include a decentralized wastewater treatment option, and
5. Determining if residents want a buffer zone between residential units and any above ground wastewater treatment facilities

To date, the LOCSD has spent an extraordinary amount of time and money on the development of a large “traditional” wastewater treatment facility and has done little to study alternate wastewater treatment or potable water reuse technologies. Residents on the other hand have been very vocal in their desire to see further cost studies for alternate wastewater treatment facilities. However, **the LOCSD Board has failed for more than a year to actively seek out or apply for grants** that would fund these needed studies. Additionally, **the LOCSD Board has not taken the initiative to expand its knowledge of wastewater treatment or potable water reuse technologies** which will be a key aspect in future grant funding. (The LOCSD Board has only held workshops on Membrane Bioreactors and STEP Systems which are two of dozens of technology options.)

The LOCSD only holds general meetings once per month and it does not have a public committee focused on wastewater treatment or potable water reuse technologies. I believe these are key reasons for the slow progress the LOCSD Board has made to date. **Moving to bi-monthly general meetings** and directing the LOCSD to **create a committee comprised of members of the public who are tasked with actively seeking out and evaluating wastewater treatment and potable water reuse technologies** would help to expedite progress and further engage more community members.

In January the LOCSD held a workshop with 50 to 60 attendees. The goal of the workshop was to have residents and property owners prioritize their requirements for a wastewater treatment

facility. This is noted on page 7 of the PowerPoint presentation. This information was used in a recent analysis of a sample of wastewater treatment facility options. However, **due to the small number of attendees (responses)** and lack of focus on the questions asked of residents and property owners **the prioritized list is entirely meaningless. Why? In order to have a confidence level of the list between 90-95% with a margin of error of 5% the LOCS D would have needed responses from 161 to 195 residents and property owners.**

The efforts taken so far by the LOCS D to site a centralized wastewater treatment facility has been flawed from the start. Why? The LOCS D has no earthly idea as to the true size of the property needed because it does not know which type of wastewater treatment technology residents want. It has also **not seriously considered decentralized wastewater treatment technologies including underground facilities** which may be more appropriate for the community. To remedy this the LOCS D Board should be directed to actively identify properties on the other side of HWY 154 where there is more undeveloped land with fewer residential homes, **after** it further studies wastewater treatment options.

Finally, the LOCS D Board must determine if residents want a buffer zone between residential homes and any above ground wastewater treatment facilities. To date it has not sought to determine if residents and property owners want to see a above ground wastewater treatment facility next door to residential homes and within a neighborhood, or **a minimum distance from residential homes in order to avoid nuisance issues like odor, noise and visual impacts.** A Proposition 218 vote can be entirely derailed by the site selection and the proximity of a wastewater treatment facility to homes. I hope that you concur with me that to have a successful vote the LOCS D must **create an adequate buffer zone between residential homes and a wastewater treatment facility, or choose to place the wastewater treatment facilities underground.**

I urge this Board to grant the two-year extension with the conditions I've suggested. These conditions will ensure that the LOCS D Board completes its mission within the two-year extension requested and further engage community members to ensure a successful vote.

Sincerely,
Anna Marie Gott