



# Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RESPONSE TO CAMBRIAN STORY, 2-26-15

In its lengthy Feb. 26 article “Cambria Water Project Issues Surface,” The Cambrian describes everything it could find that is going wrong with the Emergency Water Supply project.

What did it come up with? We count three confirmed issues in the story: Noise concerns related to the evaporation pond blowers, communication gaps with government agencies and neighbors of the plant, and the brief release of treated, chlorinated water upstream of the San Simeon Creek lagoon.

We don’t see these matters as trivial. We are committed to being a good neighbor, to keeping everyone affected by the project fully informed, and to complying with permit requirements and regulations in every detail. The issues noted by The Cambrian are in the process of being corrected, or have already been corrected.

But we also ask readers to consider some context that The Cambrian left out. The issues cited in the article are *operational*. That is, they are problems of the sort that come to light when something is up and running, not before. For instance, you don’t really know what evaporation blowers sound like, and how the sound carries, until you turn them on. Even the most exhaustive environmental impact reports and engineering studies won’t catch every bug.

To use a nautical term, the initial three-month operational phase of the EWS is its “shakedown cruise.” The purpose of running it now is not only to see if it works as designed (it does), but also to identify and correct problems that would not have been foreseen earlier. We would like to have found no such problems, of course. But now that we’ve found them, we’re able to solve them.

Opponents of the project will no doubt claim that none of the things described in The Cambrian story would have happened if the project had gone through the usual multi-year environmental review and permitting process rather than being fast-tracked as an emergency measure. They’re wrong, because it takes real-world operation to find operational problems.

And consider what the current shakedown is accomplishing. It is ensuring that the EWS will be fully tested and ready this summer to do its work of supplying Cambrians with sorely needed water. The current rainy season is shaping up to be sub-normal, leading to a fourth year of drought. If the EWS had been shunted to the usual permitting timetable for public works projects in California, it would still be on the drawing boards. Then where would our water come from? Good question.