



September 17, 2015

For immediate release

Cambria CSD Responds to Cal Coast News.com Article on Fiscal Situation, Status of EWS

CAMBRIA, CA – The Cambria Community Services District (CCSD) issued the following statement today in response to a Sept. 15 article on the Cal Coast News.com website:

The article headlined “Cambria is running out of time and money” contains a number of misleading statements, factual errors and unsubstantiated claims. We wish to draw readers’ attention to these statements in particular:

- “[The CCSD] has just two and a half months before it will begin operating in the red.” This statement makes highly selective use of publicly available data to imply, falsely, that the CCSD is headed off a fiscal cliff. It cites only a projected negative cash balance of \$43 on Dec. 1, 2015 and neglects to mention the positive projections for the following months: \$1.67 million on Jan. 1, 2016 (due mainly to property tax receipts), \$750,000 on Feb. 1, and \$543,000 on March 1 (the end of the seven-month projection period). These figures were presented at the Sept. 10 meeting of the CCSD Board of Directors and were included in the agenda on the CCSD website. They do not include any grant funds that the CCSD may receive.
- “Because of engineering deficiencies the [Emergency Water Supply] plant is rarely operational.” Not so. The EWS was in operation nearly three months earlier this year. It is now in a restart process and will shortly be in full production mode. It works, and it produces excellent quality water
- “The [EWS] has thus far generated little water for Cambria residents.” On the contrary, during its initial operation from Jan. 20 to April 17, 2015, the EWS produced 13 million gallons of treated water to recharge the San Simeon Creek Aquifer. That’s 40 acre-feet, or enough to meet the demand from about a thousand Cambria households for that period.
- “The [EWS] had numerous flaws and had to be shut down for repairs.” The EWS was shut down on April 17, a week ahead of schedule, but not because of any flaws in its operation. Nitrates in product water were exceeding a conservatively low state permit limit, which is lower than the concentration allowed by the state for drinking water. The problem was due to high nitrate levels in the source water (treated wastewater) being processed by the EWS, and it has been corrected.
- “[The EWS] pond is too small to effectively treat the brine-laden water.” The pond, part of a system that includes mechanical evaporators, is not “too small” to do its job. If anything, it has worked more efficiently than expected.
- “The district paid engineering firm CDM Smith \$500,000 to design and construct the pond and then agreed to pay another \$500,000 to have the pond fixed.” The cost of designing and constructing the pond was included in the overall construction contract for the EWS, so we don’t know where Cal Coast News gets the first \$500,000 figure. There is also no factual basis for the estimate of \$500,000 to “have the pond fixed.” The contractor has adjusted the operation of the mechanical evaporators to address concerns raised by the mist they produce, but the CCSD was not charged for these. The CCSD also has taken steps to minimize the project’s environmental impact, and it is currently completing an environmental analysis to identify any further environmental mitigation that might be required for a regular coastal development permit on the project (it currently operates under an emergency CDP). Further mitigation could lead to new outlays. But, at this point, what measures will be taken and how much they will cost have not been determined.

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Media contact:

Tom Gray, Public Information Officer
805-750-1257; tsgrey@sbcglobal.net