

Manager's Column

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### **“Stage IV Water Shortage” – What Does this Mean?**

*The mission of the Nipomo Community Services District is to provide its customers with reliable, quality, and cost-effective services now and in the future.*

There has been a lot of talk in the news and around town about Nipomo Community Services District's ("NCS D") action and inaction. The NCS D Board of Directors spent the morning of their July 13 Board Meeting in conversation with the community regarding what to do and what not to do with regards to water conservation. Decisions are best made with those who are most impacted by the outcomes. In the case of Stage IV water shortage conditions, the possible actions in play will impact everyone. The Board acted in a manner that reflected the majority of voices by deciding not to enforce further conservation measures.

It is to be expected that some will endorse and some criticize whatever decisions come from a government entity. Regardless of the criticism, the NCS D Board has one interest – to do what is best for the community they reside in and represent. Our community in Nipomo is made up of both longtime residents who don't want to see any change and outside developers with grand visions of opportunity. Mostly, Nipomo is made up of individuals content to live their life in peace, see their family grow and prosper, and give back to a town where they enjoy living. Often times you'll find these are the same people who put themselves under public scrutiny and fill the quasi-volunteer positions on local boards and committees.

The NCS D Board is scheduled to take action at its July 27, 2016, Board Meeting and declare a Stage IV water shortage condition. After hearing public comment earlier in the month, the Board will not enforce the more stringent water conservation efforts at this time. This action will allow the Board to be more responsive to any shift in water conservation behavior by District customers should additional conservation measures need to quickly be implemented. The Board has the luxury of inaction on this matter because of the community's conservation efforts and the District's completion of the Supplemental Water Project which is bringing a new source of water onto the Mesa.

As we reflect on how a group of people can come to consensus and make a decision, we think back on the different philosophies of justice. Do we look for the “greater good for the greatest number” (Mr. Bentham, 18<sup>th</sup> century), or “the rule of law” thinking (John Rawls, 20<sup>th</sup> century) that protects an individual's rights against the greatest number? Discussing this paradoxical dilemma over a glass of wine with friends can be a pleasure. Discussing who gets water to wash that glass, in a Board room heated with contention, is a completely different matter. In both cases, the answers are illusive and subjective to a point of view.

Until next time...

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