

Ballot Argument in Favor of the Right to Vote on Desalination Charter Amendment

Measure P, a citizen-sponsored initiative, would guarantee the right of Santa Cruz voters to decide on desalination. If passed, Measure P would amend the City Charter to **require voter approval before the City could authorize a desalination project**. The right to vote on desalination could not be removed from the City Charter without another vote of the people. By itself Measure P neither approves nor rejects desalination.

Thousands of voters signed the petition to qualify Measure P for the ballot. Many believe that the proposed expandable desalination facility in Santa Cruz raises such serious economic, environmental, and community concerns that the decision should be made by the people.

The proposed desalination project would be the most expensive public works project in Santa Cruz history. Anticipating desalination, the City has already doubled water rates since 2005. Further rate increases would be necessary to build, operate, and maintain the plant, as well as to service its long-term debt. An expenditure of such magnitude warrants voter oversight.

Desalination is highly energy intensive. Producing desalinated water consumes over 10 times more electricity per gallon than the current method, making our water supply more dependent on PG&E's fossil-fuel energy sources.

The brine and chemical wastes from the plant would be diluted with outflow from the wastewater treatment plant before discharging into Monterey Bay. Use of treated wastewater to dilute the plant's discharge would eliminate opportunities to use recycled water for purposes such as groundwater recharge.

Before burdening future generations with these financial and environmental liabilities, the City needs to adequately explore alternatives.

Vote YES on Measure P to guarantee that voters in Santa Cruz will have a real say in our water security and in the environmental and economic sustainability of our community.

VOTE YES ON P!

Rick Longinotti,
Coalition for Right to Vote on Desalination

Celia Scott,
former Santa Cruz Mayor

Dustin MacDonald,
Chair, Surfrider Foundation, Santa Cruz Chapter

Michael Guth,
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