

Opinion

Sentinel Editorial

Water Storage

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Supply

Members of the Santa Cruz General Plan Committee got the hard economic facts of life about water storage and development last week.

Brown and Caldwell executive Bob Mills told the committee that the most economical manner to store water for the needs of the city would be the development of the Zayante Dam.

Cost of water at the Zayante was estimated at \$176 an acre foot compared to around \$200 for water from the San Felipe project or 553 an acre foot for reclaimed water which cannot be used for domestic purposes.

Some council members and other interested parties have fretted about the potential safety of the Zayante project or whether the city really needs to have additional water storage beyond the capacity of Loch Lomond, the Newell Creek water reservoir.

Some other city representatives have considered the eventual demands for water storage limited to the size of the city, a position we strongly oppose.

We can ill afford to think of water as a municipal commodity, it is — and long has been — a regional program in which the city is the logical leader.

As we look at the Santa Cruz community today, including environs such as Scotts Valley, the San Lorenzo Valley and the Mid-County, it is abundantly clear that we must create additional water facilities.

Key to the creation of additional water sources is the overwhelming need to provide for adequate water storage so that we will not be confronted with costly water shortages in the dry years.

Loch Lomond is a start, but only a start for even now the city is providing some water for the San Lorenzo Valley with the eventuality of providing water for Scotts Valley and for sectors of the Mid-County along with the North Coast.

If Zayante is not the logical site for an additional

dam to supplement Loch Lomond, then the city must turn to more costly sites such as Rodeo Gulch or North Coast areas.

It may well be that in the long run, the city may have to work in conjunction with the Soquel Creek County Water District to provide storage both for the city and for the Mid-County.

The use of San Felipe water for Santa Cruz is somewhat doubtful just on a cost basis. It will be essential, however, for the Pajaro Valley and possibly for Monterey County.

To be used for domestic purposes, San Felipe water would have to be transferred to Santa Cruz at a fairly high pumping cost and then would have to be treated at an additional cost.

Soquel Creek apparently has good underground supplies although they still must develop a storage system so as not to threaten to the underground supplies in an extended drought period.

Both the San Lorenzo Valley and Scotts Valley are hardly in a financial position to spend a great deal of money on water development or water storage. Their best long range opportunities appear to be in establishing co-operative projects with Santa Cruz.

As far as the economics are concerned, there is little chance that reclaimed water can do anything else than supplement irrigation use, at least, in the foreseeable future.

The need for water development is a multi-use program which requires the development of sources, capacity for adequate storage, expansion of distribution systems and modern treatment facilities.

It is clearly evident that our best hope to meet these crucial demands is through co-operative efforts in which both political and financial decisions must be made to best serve all the people.