

Local Water Demons

As you recall, Les Herringer is the Water Commission appointment of Supervisor Jane Dolan. She has defended her selection of Herringer for the last three years after passage of Measure G, the water sellers response to the populist Measure F. Herringer campaigned for Measure G and attacked Measure F as too costly and stated it would require a County Department, inflaming the local passions against another terrible layer of government financed by public dollars. In reality, Measure F would have been funded by agricultural well users through a nominal annual fee, and yes, it would have required a Department to adequately protect the life blood of the local ag community.

Now the Water Commission, comprised of eight water sellers or ag dependent Farm Bureau fellas and one upper watershed representative, is making the rules for selling water from this County, has absconded with general fund money for the County water division of the Agriculture Department, and is discussing the creation of a separate Water Department. My, how good ideas are recycled after the bad-boys lie during elections.

BEC has warned the public repeatedly about this being a hen house guarded by the vixen, but the brazen arrogance of the water sellers has never been more evident than from the following quote from the April 6, 1999 Butte County Water Commission meeting. The public voiced concern about the ability to mitigate losses to all the domestic well users if water levels dropped following sales, and Les Herringer replied, "The intent of the ordinance is not to prevent impacts." Herringer mimics the response by Exxon following the Valdez oil disaster in Alaska: we don't care, we don't have to, we have power and the Supervisor's blessing.

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