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WATER™

[www.venturawater.net](http://www.venturawater.net)

July 15, 2020

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Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

The Ventura River Watershed is a precious resource that we all depend on for life's most basic need — water. The Watershed supplies water to the many agricultural users, businesses, individuals, water districts and cities that rely on it, as well as the wildlife that depend on it. Today, however, the Watershed is at risk as a result of changing climate conditions and prolonged periods of drought. The Watershed's resources are consistently being stretched to capacity. It is a serious challenge that requires timely action.

In order to safeguard this valuable water supply, the City of Ventura, in response to a lawsuit filed by Santa Barbara Channelkeeper, has commenced a legal process, the goal of which is to establish a collaborative, court-approved agreement (called a "physical solution") to protect this resource and those who rely on it.

What this means, is that the City is working with other water users to establish a plan that takes into account all of the Watershed's interests. This plan will be court-approved and binding. An example of one of those plan measures is to remove barriers to fish migration in the Watershed, to help ensure survival of the Southern California Steelhead. This approach enables a locally developed solution, rather than the State solely determining water usage, and allows the City and its settlement partners to maintain control of our unique local resource, considering all water users' needs and safeguarding this supply for users and the environment. The agreement would ensure that water users are held accountable — including the City — in an enforceable document.

In order for the court to approve a solution and settlement agreement between the City and other water stakeholders, the City must notify all affected interests who would like the chance to participate in the process. As an owner of property in the Ventura River Watershed, you fall into this category.

**As a result, the City is making every effort to send you a legal notice that requires a return receipt. The City previously attempted to send this material to you, along with everyone else who owns or resides on similar property, but did not receive a return receipt acknowledging that the materials were delivered to this location.**

**The law requires the City to post a notice of this legal action on all parcels of land located above the basins for which the City does not obtain a return receipt. To avoid the inconvenience and visual blight such a posting might create, the City is writing to inform you of this process, and that it will be making a second attempt to mail this material to you. The City would greatly appreciate receiving your return receipt.**

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What You Should Expect

In the upcoming weeks, you will receive via mail, a set of legal documents (a Notice) because you own or reside on property that sits on top of one of the four groundwater basins in the Watershed. You are receiving this material because the law and the court require that you be given notice of this proceeding. The specific property and/or properties covered by this notice are:

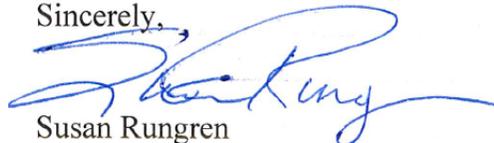
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The notice does not make you a party to this legal action, and after providing the return receipt, no further action is required on your part unless you choose to file an answer and become a party to the lawsuit. In other words, the City is not suing you, but is letting you know of this legal action and providing anyone who wishes to become a party the time to do so. Currently, anyone who wishes to file an answer and become a party must do so by Sept. 8, 2020. The City would like to note that it is not actively seeking litigation in this matter, and is working with other water users to establish a collaborative, court-approved physical solution to protect the Watershed and reach a settlement agreement. The City is not seeking any monetary judgment and the action will not directly impact people who receive water from a public water provider. It is possible that implementation of the proposed physical solution may increase costs to public water providers and may result in increased water rates in the future. It is also possible that monetary assessments may be imposed on those that divert and/or pump water from the Watershed.

For more information about the City's goals in this process, as well as answers to frequently asked questions, please visit [venturariver.com](http://venturariver.com) — a website the City has created to cover this issue exclusively. Additional information and legal documents may be found at the official adjudication website: [www.venturariverwatershedadjudication.com](http://www.venturariverwatershedadjudication.com). If you have questions about this letter, please feel free to contact me or the City Manager's Office at (805) 654-7740. If you have questions about the legal material, please feel free to contact Patrick Skahan with Best, Best & Krieger at (213)-542-3869, or consult with your own attorney. The City and its attorneys cannot give you legal advice.

The City recognizes its responsibility in providing clear communication about this complicated process, and is committed to performing its due diligence in this matter to ensure clarity and transparency of the proceedings and any actions that may impact water users. This is a pivotal moment for the Watershed. To reach our collective goals of protecting our vital local resources and environment, and maintaining local control, we all need to have clear and accurate information. The City looks forward to working with everyone who has an interest in this proceeding to achieve these goals.

Sincerely,



Susan Rungren  
Ventura Water General Manager  
City of Ventura