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**To:** [April Jacobs](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for April 19th Water Board meeting  
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April 15, 2022

Water Board members:

I understand that you will likely be approving a Stage 2 Water Shortage Contingency Plan and Water Supply Shortage Ordinance at your April 19 meeting. This is after deciding *last* month that there's enough water to supply the Castaic Lake Mountain Apartments – over 1,000 new units! Please tell me how in the world that makes sense! We all know that with climate change, water shortages are only going to get worse. In fact, several articles I've read indicate that climate scientists believe we're in the worst drought in 1200 years, and that it won't end anytime soon. The latest IPCC report confirms that we have an existential problem that's getting worse each year and will continue to do so until we slash emissions radically – which so far is not happening.

Given that fact, it is patently foolish to keep building new housing year after year when we're already in deep trouble over water. I don't know by what calculation you managed to decide there will be enough water in the future, but I believe you're basing the decision on wishful thinking -- expecting best-case weather scenarios -- instead of on what science is telling us. Mountain snowpack provides about 30% of the yearly freshwater supply for California, and although there are years here and there when it's almost normal, the trend is for less and less snowpack. And that pattern is expected to continue as long as climate change proceeds unabated. All of our reservoirs are at dangerous, historically low levels, too, though some gained a little water from last winter's rains.

We usually get some of our local water from the state, but the state can't give us water that it doesn't have to give. And that depends on the snowpack (see above). Was it last year that we got a zero allotment? Also, almost half of our local wells have been shut down because of PFAS chemical contamination, so even our groundwater use (which provides about 40% of our water) is threatened, until that situation can be fixed. We have *some* reserves due to water banking, but only a two-year supply. Overall, the situation is grim, but unbelievably, it isn't being treated like a crisis!

I realize money is involved for the city in the form of taxes, and developers are no doubt putting money and influence behind all elected officials who will continue to allow them to build high-end housing. That scenario enriches *them*, but what about the people who live here? Public welfare/the common good is rarely the priority when money is involved, and it appears to me that *you* — our “public servants” — are gambling with our future water supply, and water is a basic necessity of life!

The approval of a thousand new housing units in the midst of a 1200-year drought is neither a reasonable nor moral decision to make, and *it should be reversed*. Even projects that have

already been approved could have additional requirements attached for the developers (sometimes it's decades between approval and actual building) based on our *current climate emergency*. Developers could be required to have permeable pavement; to use only native, drought-tolerant plants in their landscaping; to include bioswales and recharge areas in their plans; to provide for stormwater catchment; and be forbidden to pave over floodplains, for a few examples. There's money from Measure W to cover some of these sound, regenerative investments.

This is not a time for business as usual! Ignoring our current climate reality – one we've never experienced as a civilization before – is completely irresponsible. I'm counting on you to be *true* public servants and make responsible decisions for the good of *all* residents.

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