

September 19, 2018  
Indian Wells Valley GSA Committee

My name is Sophia Anne Merk (Sam) and since I cannot physically be present at this meeting, I send Raymond Kelso in my stead. What most people don't know about Raymond is that he used to haul water, which is a unique experience and he really puts the correct value on water.

When I first moved on the hill south of town we hauled water from Stark who delivered water to rocket town. When Stark was taken over by the IWVWD, we were promised within the next 4 to 8 years we would be hooked up to water. Three years later IWVWD wanted to move the tank to the college heights area, which only serviced three customers. At that time there was over sixty water haulers in the southwest area. We went to our Supervisor Roy Ashburn and he helped us keep it on this side of China Lake Boulevard. At that time we were promised in two years we would have water on the hill.

My life line depends on water. I do not have guests at my house four months of the year due to lack of water to run an evaporative cooler and wash extra dishes, showers and toilets. I do have a small air conditioner in my bedroom which I put in this July and have bricks in my toilet to use less water. I have one party a year and I rent a port a potty. I use approximately 750 gallons of water a month nine months of the year, in the summer I might use 1500 gallons a month. I take a shower with a bucket to catch the extra water and re-use it for my toilet. I received a building permit in the 80's based on the information I had at the time and built my house larger thinking that I would get water per their promise.

Fast forward to Solar Millennium. Once again the IWVWD said we would get water up here as they were going to run a pipeline for them. Most of us on the hill were against the project even though we would have benefited greatly from that. I went to every meeting and wrote letters against the project because of the system they wanted to put in was not the usual photo voltaic project but would use tremendous amounts of water that we don't have. By the way, City Council and IWVWD were for the project. Yes, we on the hill would have benefited but at the expense of the water basin. At that time, I asked the IWVWD how much it would cost to get water up here. I was told I had to run a 16 inch pipeline. I checked in other places in town and they required an 8 inch pipeline. I guess we are/were special.

2018, we still do not have water and I have been hauling water since 1981. I pay ~~\$~~\$8.80 per month to haul on the average less than a thousand gallons a month per year. I'm not complaining. I chose my life style and when the time comes will have to move away from the community that I have loved because I can no longer haul water. A couple of years ago, my friend Goldie died at the water tank hauling water. Besides from my monthly cost, I have a special truck, tires, gas and tank I have to deal with at a higher cost than maintaining a regular car as do most of us on the hill.

However, it was very upsetting to after attending most of the GSA meetings, to find that the IWVWD is still exporting water out of this basin and Kern County to highway 58 and 395 at a cost that is not reflective of the condition of the aquafer. In one day I saw four 10,000 gallon tankers heading south because PG&E can get their water here cheaper. A construction meter costs \$1550.00 and PG&E has two construction water meters which will be refunded to them when they turn in their construction meter. They pay \$3.10 per 100 cubic feet per acre and a monthly charge of \$41.40 bringing their

monthly amount to \$44.50. To date they have used 410,000 gallons of water or one and one third acre feet. I spoke up at a Water Meeting with the IWVWD a week and a half ago and was told that our bulk water is to go up. We barely get one new hose a year and our keys do not shut the water off. We can lose 50 to 100 gallons after we shut their key off. We are people and we were promised years ago to water.

I still have heartburn over the fountain at Ridgecrest City. I and most of us on the hill could live on the water that is wasted and it is not "beneficial use".

We clearly need a good GSA Plan but instead of blaming farmers, Trona, Aqua Helio, PG&E, people with swimming pools and flowers, or scummy local water haulers (which we have been called) we need to find a solution to the over drafting such as importing water and placing a reflective value on construction water that is used outside this basin, construction water that is used inside the basin and water rates with IWVWD that reflect the actual usage and a better cost to deliver. We need to have a Kern County Groundwater Ordinance that says we cannot drill in another's cone of depression as San Bernardino recently passed and I talked about at the GSA meeting two months ago.

We all eat food, some of us have livestock that eat the hay that is provided here in this valley and we want to be warm by natural gas and their pipeline, swim in pools, have dishwashers and washers. By the way, when the GSA, PAC and TAC first started, I put in an application as a water hauler and the area I live in is a DAC area. I was not chosen and to date I don't feel that most of the people on the PAC/TAC and GSA understand our situation on the hill and our concerns.

Thank you,

Sophia Anne Merk (Sam)



Cc:

PAC, TAC

Inyo, Kern and San Bernardino Counties

California Rural Water Department