

Citizens For Safe Water / Families For Safe Water Coalition

In general, we support using water from the purest source available and creating a strong water conservation program. To these ends:

1. We support the continued use of Portland's pristine Bull Run water as the primary source for Tualatin Valley Water District customers because Bull Run is purest source available.

The District's claim that Portland's water is too expensive does not justify using a less pure source, whether it be the Willamette or Hagg Lake. Portland's wholesale rates are calculated using standard methods approved by the American Water Works Association (as the District admits). They are lower than Seattle's wholesale rates.¹ EPA says using the best source available is “more desirable, effective and economical” than paying for treatment to clean up an already polluted source.²

2. We will accept the raising of Scoggins Dam and Hagg Lake to supplement Portland's Bull Run water.

If the capacity of the Washington County Supply line from Bull Run for TVWD is tapped out (42.3 mgd), then the second best choice as a supplemental supply is Hagg Lake. Unlike Bull Run that is closed to public access, Hagg Lake is a recreational lake in a county park visited by over 600,000 people annually. Because of man-made pollution like combustion products from outboard motors, pesticides from local agriculture, and waste from human visitors, this water does not measure up to the purity of Bull Run water but is a better water source than the Willamette. We prefer to maximize the use of Bull Run water, and use Hagg Lake water as a supplemental source only.

3. We oppose the use of Willamette River water until the river is clean and free of toxins and then only if approved by the District's voters.

The Willamette drains 12,000 square miles of forest, agricultural and urban land accumulating pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, animal residue, treated and untreated sewage, and general urban runoff. EPA regulates a small subset of these chemicals, often with limits much more permissive than allowed by the European Union or recommended by the World Health Organization. Recent studies indicate many unregulated substances commonly present in polluted rivers can have significant harmful effects at very low concentrations. Because long-term effects of some of these substances are unknown, EPA recommends using the cleanest available source water. The District's customers have indicated by a five-to-one margin that they prefer Bull Run water to Willamette water. The District should be required to get the approval of its customers before spending any money on Willamette source projects.

4. We support storing water in an underground aquifer when water is plentiful in the winter and spring to help meet high summer peak demand, and for emergency use.

Many cities are using Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) because it is a low-cost way to store a large volume of water during winter months for use during the dry summer months when customer peak demand is high.. It also provides a cushion in case of temporary loss of a supply system component.

5. We support water conservation measures to reduce the need for costly expansion of water source facilities.

As for most natural resource needs, the last increment is the most costly. Capital expenses for new sources, pipelines, and treatment add fixed cost to the water system. Wasteful use of water is especially offensive. We favor a graduated rate structure, incentives to replace old wasteful fixtures, and encouragement of efficient irrigation systems.

6. Regardless of water source, we oppose privatization or private operation of a water treatment plant or any water supply component.

The track record of private water system owners and operators provides ample reason for keeping this critical piece of our infrastructure in public hands.

¹ http://www.seattle.gov/util/Services/Water/Rates/WHOLESALE_2003120209103210.asp

² Children and Drinking Water Standards; EPA, December 1999