

City of Calistoga
 Planning Commission
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February 3, 2009

Subject: PA 2008-04, CDR 2008-04
Ref: Calistoga Municipal Code 13.08.395 "Geothermal Mineralized Water Discharges"

"A. The City is required to utilize land irrigation as a method of wastewater effluent disposal during the summer dry season when there is insufficient flow for dilution in the Napa River, and it is therefore necessary to limit the concentration of boron, total dissolved solids, chlorides and sulfates that could have a toxic effect upon plant growth or degrade groundwater that could otherwise be used as a source of irrigation water.

B. Regulations pertaining to restriction of boron content as set forth in CMC 13.08.345 and other sections of this chapter shall be strictly enforced.

C. No person or entity shall by any connection, use, maintenance, construction, alteration or repair of sanitary sewer facilities, discharge or cause to be introduced into the sanitary sewer system any substance or material which has an element of chloride or sulfate exceeding 250 milligrams per liter, or of total dissolved solids that would exceed 500 milligrams per liter. All such discharges are prohibited. (Ord. 435 § 6, 1988; Ord. 322 § 1, 1976).

Honorable Commissioners

As a winery owner I am generally in favor of most quality winery projects. As such I am not completely against the Bounsai proposal. I am however against this proposal if it proposes to increase the wastewater flow into the city municipal wastewater system. Though not the responsibility of the developer, the city continues to neglect its own ordinances with respect to the discharge of boron-toxic waters into the wastewater flow.

Currently, treated wastewater must be diluted by 600% in order to mitigate the toxic effects of boron in the present wastewater. Until and unless the city adopts a responsible policy with respect to enforcement of its own ordinances against direct dumping of boron-toxic geothermal water, it would be irresponsible to approve any project with the potential to increase the AMOUNT of municipal wastewater. Alternately, such projects should only be approved if all wastewater generated by the project is to be treated and disposed of on the project site.

As the state becomes increasingly parched and the Napa River is looking more and more like a Mojave arroyo, the images of "green" and "healthy" which Calistoga strives to project are in harsh conflict with its secret though absolute refusal to enforce its own boron contamination laws, its subsequent chronic and intentional environmental abuse, its corresponding grossly irresponsible resource management and of course, its disgustingly obvious preferential politics. These actions collectively and irrefutably reveal the true character of Calistoga's previous administrations at best as benevolent in denial or at worst as blatantly hypocritical.

No project with the potential to increase municipal wastewater and thus exacerbate the disposal of same should be approved until and unless the City of Calistoga acknowledges and enforces its own laws against boron-toxicity in the municipal wastewater.

Respectfully,

Paul G. Smith