



Santa Clarita Organization for Planning and the Environment

SCOPE

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Court Rules for SCOPE and Friends of the Santa Clara River in a Decision that Will Protect the Santa Clara River

In a long-awaited decision made at the end of April, the Los Angeles County Superior Court set aside the Vista Canyon Ranch approvals and ordered a new look at its affect on the Watershed.

Proposed for the rural Sand Canyon area, the 1050 unit project, including additional commercial space and a 200 room hotel, is located almost entirely in the floodplain of the [Santa Clara River](#), Los Angeles County's last free-flowing River. Requiring some 500,000 cubic yards of dirt to fill the floodplain in order to raise the level of the construction area to meet Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) safety standards, it would pave over a vital source of ground water re-charge. The proposal also called for 7500' linear feet of channelization of the Santa Clara River in the upper watershed area of the Santa Clara River.

The project was approved with disregard to the fact that this area is designated a "Significant Ecological Area" by both the City of Santa Clarita and the County of Los Angeles.

Touted as transportation oriented, it would be built around a non-existent MetroLink Station. Its developers proposed to move the existing Via Princessa Station to this new outlying location, even though that station's currently centralized location is servicing many commuters who would lose their easy access point if the station is moved. Questions remain as to who will pay to have this station closed and moved away from existing riders - the developer or the taxpayers?

In his finding, Superior Court Judge Goodman ruled that the EIR could **not** use the full 1620 square miles of the watershed to determine that the project had no effect on the environment, but rather that it must focus on the effect of the construction in the vicinity of the project.

We are gratified that this Judge recognized the on going problem of cumulative effects to the river. 7500' of linear banking and massive filling of the river in this area is significant, and cumulatively leads to the loss of natural river function/ The Judge also ruled that the Environmental Impact Report must summarize the reports submitted to substantiate its findings. Community groups throughout California have long raised concerns about the thousands of pages that they must read to understand the typical environmental impact report. This ruling will aid both Planning Commissions and the community members in their efforts to ensure environmentally sustainable projects in their



neighborhoods.



Are You Worried About Genetically Modified Foods and Monsanto's Control over Our Food Supply? Then You May Want to Join the **March Against Monsanto This Saturday- May 25TH**

**Downtown Los Angeles - Pershing Square
Gather 9AM March 11 AM**

Celebrities and participants will gather together around 9 a.m. with the march starting at 11 a.m. "Several countries such as Germany, Italy, France, Egypt, Australia, Brazil & Spain have banned the growth and/or import of GE Crops and/or GE Maize", says actress Robin Arcuri. Over 200,00 are expected to participate in this worldwide event protesting against the Monsanto Company and its genetically-modified foods, which are harmful to the environment and and may be harmful to human health.



Public Utilities Commission Hears from SCV Residents on Proposed 16% Water Rate Hike & Illegal Buyout of Valencia Water Company

Earlier this year, SCOPE filed a [Complaint](#) before the California Public Utilities Commission to protest the sweetheart deal to acquire Valencia Water Company, wholly owned subsidiary of Newhall Land and Development Co, developers of the 21,000 unit Newhall Ranch. The \$73.8 million dollar deal between Newhall and Castaic Lake Water Agency would illegally commit future water supplies to the massive Newhall Ranch project in Northern Los Angeles County. The fact that Newhall Land owned the water company that would serve the project, has long caste doubt on the fairness of the water supply assessments. Now Castaic Water Agency has agreed in advance to serve all of Newhall's projects as part of this purchase no matter how that would affect current residents or businesses.

Over 60 residents attended the Local Rate Hearings in opposition to the buyout. The Judge ordered additional briefing and the matter will go to the Commission for a final decision in August. Click [Here](#) to read about it in the Signal newspaper.

SCOPE in the News -

["Suit Challenges Purchase of Water Company to benefit Newhall Ranch"](#)

["Court Rules Against Vista Ranch"](#)

["The Environmental Quality Act Helps Every Day Heros Protect the Water We Drink"](#)

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Grandma says, "You should help the environment"

"Long time SCOPE member Evelyn Carpenter helped us to help you save the Santa Clara River with her donation to SCOPE.

You can too!"

Don't forget! - You can get in depth information on our current activities and additional articles by visiting our new [blog](#) site.



Contributions are tax deductible and may be sent to:

SCOPE
(click for donation form)
P.O. Box 1182
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