



## Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter

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May 14, 2015

San Jose City Hall  
Planning Commission Members  
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San José, CA 95113

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RE: File No. CP14-029, McKean Tank and Pipeline Project

Dear Chair Yob and City of San Jose Planning Commissioners,

The Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter (SCLP) is 16,000+ local members of the Sierra Club who enjoy, explore, and protect the planet.

SCLP believes that further efforts can be made to minimize the McKean Tank and Pipeline Project habitat and visual impacts on the adjacent New Almaden Mine Historic District, Calero and Almaden Quicksilver County Parks, and local residents. With New Almaden designated as a Historic District and McKean Road designated in the Santa Clara County General Plan as a Scenic Route and the City of San Jose General Plan as a Rural Scenic Corridor, it is clear that the project should include on-site mitigations to aesthetic and biological impacts.

Since no pictorial views were presented in the Initial Study (IS) from the New Almaden Mine Historic District, SCLP herein provides photo simulations as Exhibit "A". Exhibit "B" shows the IS simulation of the view from Calero County Park. The IS states, *"Recreationists at nearby recreation areas (e.g., Calero County Park, Almaden-Quicksilver County Park) and visitors to the New Almaden Historic District may also have brief views of the top of the tank as they use trails or view the surrounding*

*landscape from a distance, but the new tank would not substantially detract from the visual setting based on its location and appearance.*" After examining Exhibit "A" and "B", the conclusion that the new tank would not substantially detract from the visual setting is difficult to accept. Further, while the brief view of visitors to the New Almaden Historic District is mentioned, the *long running* effect on the viewshed of those *most* impacted, the residents of the District, is not.

Reasonable efforts to reduce the visual impact should be a requirement of a conditional use permit.

- On-site tree planting of local natives to provide screening around the water tank, rather than a fee to Our City Forest as called for in the IS, should be required. While it may be difficult to establish trees in the serpentine soil, the many native trees already growing in the area prove that it is possible. Water is obviously available with a water tank project for the establishment period.
- Multiple paint colors simulating the existing conditions should be required. "Photo realistic" painting is often used in large billboard style advertising and the long-term protection of public resources with the adjacent county parks and sensitive historic district warrant the requirement.
- It may also be possible to site the water tank further away from the cliff and at a slightly lower elevation to minimize or eliminate the visual impact from the nearest New Almaden Historic District views, see Exhibit "C".

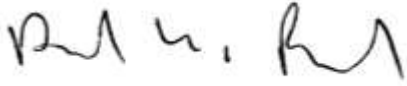
Further, a slight relocation of the planned pipeline route particularly where it approaches the Los Alamitos Creek crossing can greatly reduce tree removal and the impact on riparian habitat, see Exhibit "D".

- By moving the pipeline route a few feet north of the planned creek crossing many trees can be preserved. There are no sensitive species or rare plants in this alternative route.
- Although the maintenance requirements of the pipeline prohibit replanting of trees near the pipeline, shallow rooting native shrubs and riparian species can be planted. Appropriate species such as California Rose, *Rosa californica*, California Buckwheat, *Eriogonum fasciculatum*, and California Blackberry, *Rubus ursinus*, could be planted over the pipeline and shrubs such as Coffeeberry, *Rhamnus californica*, Sagebrush *Artemisia californica*, and Black Sage, *Salvia mellifera*, could be planted nearby.

The elevated historic and scenic resources in the area warrant enhanced requirements to minimize biological and aesthetic impacts with this project.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. W. Poeschel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names being more prominent than the middle initial.

David W. Poeschel  
Open Space Committee Chair  
Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter

Cc: Barbara Kelsey, Loma Prieta Chapter Coordinator  
Mike Ferreira, Loma Prieta Chapter Conservation Chair  
Michele Dexter, District 10 Council Staff  
Whitney Berry, Project Manager, City of San Jose

Exhibit "A"

Simulated View from Home at 20861 Almaden Rd.



Simulated View from Horse Stable at 20876 Almaden Rd.



Exhibit "B"

Photo Simulation of View from Calero County Park from IS

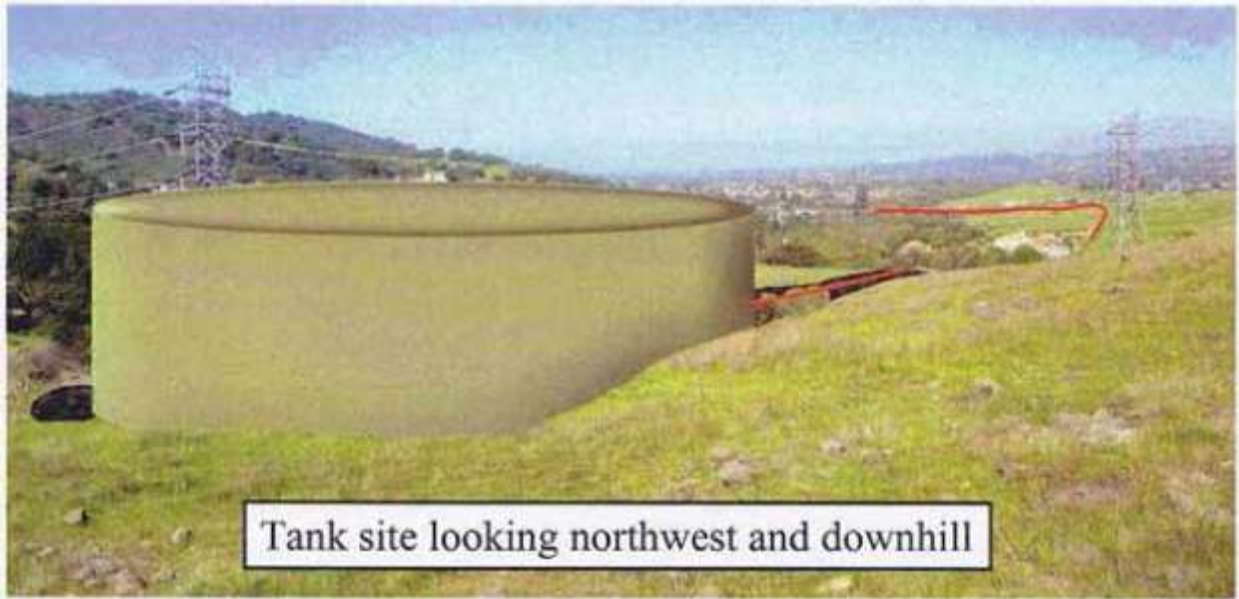


Exhibit "C"

Less Visible Alternative Tank Sites



Exhibit "D"

Alternative Pipeline Route Requiring Fewer Tree Removals

