

January 24, 2024

VIA EMAIL: buikema@cawd.org, downstream@cawd.org

ATTN: Barbara Buikema
Carmel Area Wastewater District
3945 Rio Road
Carmel, CA 93922

Subject: Removal from Assessment for Corona Road Sewer Project

Dear Ms. Buikema:

Based on a review of the information made available to us thus far, I am writing to formally request the removal of our property from the Corona Road assessment for sewer.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of reasons for our request:

As per the Monterey County Code of Ordinances, Section 5.20.050, which has been cited regularly by CAWD, the Monterey County Environmental Health Bureau, and Planning Commissioner Daniels in her presentation to the community and which outlines the requirements for connecting structures to public sewers, we have determined that our property qualifies for an exception to the mandatory connection to an approved sanitary sewer.

Specifically, our property meets the following criteria:

First, our building is currently connected to an onsite wastewater treatment system (OWTS) that is functioning in a lawful manner, and it does not require pumping three times per year or more frequently to prevent overflow or malfunction. In fact, my contractor has notified me that, given continued maintenance, our system could last over 50 more years! Thus, our property will not benefit from an assessment towards a sewer option as an alternative to our functioning onsite wastewater treatment system.

Second, While I am not opposed to the concept of sewer services, the proposed mandatory assessment is undeniably a burden, rather than a benefit, to us. Given that the assessment fee of \$69,000 is exclusive of connection, trenching, and ongoing fees that would total well over \$100,000, this assessment represents an exponentially higher cost than maintaining our current, fully functioning septic system or even installing a new OWTS. The County Code specifically exempts properties for this reason.

Given that our property satisfies these conditions, I believe it falls within the exemption outlined in the Monterey County Code of Ordinances. Consequently, I wish to exercise my right to remove our property from the Corona Road assessment for sewer.

As I've emphasized in our previous discussions, CAWD consistently promoted the *option* for property owners to voluntarily opt into sewer connection (and pay only upon choosing to connect) as part of its strategy to garner support within our neighborhood and this has been documented in meetings, reports, and letters. It is crucial that this commitment is upheld and completely immaterial that the total fee for the fervent proponents of sewer would otherwise be higher.

Finally, Planning Commissioner Daniels mentioned during the most recent CAWD board meeting that, early on in the process, some homeowners petitioned the Board of Supervisors for the removal of their homes from the assessment district. This understanding of an ongoing opt-in option was confirmed by several homeowners during the community meeting just last week on November 18th.

We wish to exercise the same right and remove our property from this assessment.

I appreciate your understanding in this matter. I'm reaching out as soon as possible, given the recent awareness of a vote resulting in a mandated assessment fee and the delay in receiving the requested documents. With the hearing approaching on February 22, 2024, time is limited to catch up on critical information. **I do welcome the opportunity to engage in a productive dialogue with you that will lead to a more equitable solution for all homeowners.**

At this time, I have other concerns that I will reserve for a later discussion.

Thank you for your attention to these concerns and to our request for removal of our property from this assessment. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,



Leila Banijamali

cc: Patricia Zendejas
Daniel Rottinghouse
Frederick Hagen