

**From:** [Christine Heinrichs](#)  
**To:** [BoardComment](#)  
**Subject:** Written Comment  
**Date:** Thursday, October 17, 2024 4:34:13 PM

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## PUBLIC COMMENT

At last night's North Coast Advisory Council meeting, several members asked Mr. McElhenie and Director Thomas to explain the workings of the CSD to the public, to give Cambrians the background and information they need to participate in local government. This is a worthy idea and I encourage them to make the initial presentation at the November NCAC meeting as requested.

One member mentioned that he is unable to decipher the district's confusing communications, filled with unexplained acronyms.

Cambria needs to discuss water supply and growth. The public needs to understand what the CSD's role is and how the EWS/SWF/WRF figures into it. Why a Coastal Development Permit is needed, and what's holding it up.

Mr. McElhenie and Director Thomas had reasons why they couldn't make a basic presentation about local government: they wouldn't have time before the next meeting, maybe they need to apply for a grant and hire a contractor, etc.

Earlier in the meeting Coastal Commission staff member Devon Jackson made a presentation explaining the Coastal Commission. In about 15 minutes, he provided working knowledge of the commission, his role, and how the public can participate. He included links to documents for those who wish to pursue more detailed information.

If he can do it for the Coastal Commission, surely Cambria's board and staff can similarly explain themselves to the community.

Albert Einstein is quoted as saying:

"If you can't explain it to a six year old, you don't understand it yourself." If the board and staff find explaining the district and its water issues so difficult, perhaps this exercise will help them understand their own roles better.

I look forward to their presentation— not a litany of excuses — at the November NCAC meeting.

Item 5D

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

General manager McElhenie didn't mention the delay to the Zero Liquid Discharge pilot project in his report, but Mr. Green does in the Utilities Report. It's directly relevant to the EWS/SWF/WRF Coastal Development Permit application, because the Project Description cites it as the preferred method of brine concentrate disposal. Lacking this important piece will delay action on the CDP application.

Without Zero Liquid Discharge, the Project Description states that brine concentrate disposal would require three to nine truck trips per day.

One person associated with the ZLD project told me that the pilot project was delayed due to a requirement that every sensor be certified, a process that is taking longer than expected.

Last night at the NCAC meeting, Mr. Green said that the pilot project was delayed due to supply chain issues that delayed construction of the facility. He said that the window for conducting the test had closed, delaying the project until next summer. Could he be more precise in defining what that means?

Both of these things can be true. Is it both? One or the other? Which one?

The Project Status Summary on page 28 states that the district's biologist, who is unidentified, will prepare a third quarter report and present first and second quarter reports in October. This is the last meeting in October, and the biological reports, which are years overdue, aren't here. Who is the biologist now? Has a contract been signed? To include what? The Instream Flow Study specifically avoided any actual steelhead, red legged frogs or tidewater gobies. What's going on with these elusive biological reports? Thank you.

Thank you.

Item 6A

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

I'd like to ask why the district now needs three law firms in addition to retained district counsel, resulting in nearly \$15,000 in additional legal expenses last month, over and above the \$13,500 retainer the district pays Mr. Carmel. I'll also draw attention to the district's monthly PG&E bill, this month over \$67,000. It's time to consider making the investment to go renewable. Thank you.

**Item 8. Closed Session for the board to evaluate General Manager McElhenie.**

PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION, Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957(b)(1)

The board should hold GM McElhenie accountable for his misleading statements and failure to inform the public. The Instream Flow Study should have had a presentation to the public at the October 10 meeting. Giving a presentation to the Resources & Infrastructure Committee means only one board member, R&I chair Karen Dean, saw it, unless other members attended without comment. Few of the public have heard it. The board should have required a better report with an explanation of the summary.

His dissembling about the biological reports is unacceptable.

In the October 10 meeting, he said that the district is in discussion with another biologist, to fulfill the requirement for protecting threatened species. Who is that? The Utilities Report, on page 28, claims that the district's biologist, unidentified, will prepare a third quarter report and present first and second quarter reports in October. This is the last meeting in October, and the biological reports, years overdue, aren't on the agenda. Who is the biologist now? Has a contract been signed? To include what? The Instream Flow Study avoided any actual

steelhead, red legged frogs or tidewater gobies. What's going on with these elusive biological reports?

The board can hold him to more accurate and complete reporting.

His explanation for making a Public Records Act request of the Coastal Commission for all email exchanges between the agency and Tina Dickson and myself was absurd. President Tom Gray's claims that the emails were needed to understand what the Coastal Commission wants in the EWS/SWF/WRF CDP application is simply nonsense. After more than ten years, the district knows what the Coastal Commission expects: protection of coastal resources. If McElhenie doesn't understand what that entails, he should ask the Coastal Commission. President Gray's contention that reading my emails will reveal what the Coastal Commission wants is ridiculous.

McElhenie has wasted the Coastal Commission's time by requiring them to compile this document. Is he really spending time poring over hundreds of pages of emails?

If so, he's not going in the right direction to complete the EWS/SWF/WRF CDP application. The board should advise him to be more direct in his efforts to get this project done.

Sent from my iPad