

**Speaking Notes of the Antelope Valley
Integrated Regional Water Management Planning Group
for the
Department of Water Resources and State Water Resources Control Board
Public Meeting on Round 2 Prop 50 Draft Funding Recommendations
May 8, 2008**

My name is Randy Williams. I am here to represent the Antelope Valley Integrated Regional Water Management Plan Leadership Team.

First, I wish to acknowledge the Department of Water Resources and the State Water Resources Control Board for their well-considered process to evaluate the proposals, and to commend you for arriving at logical decisions based on reasoned facts, to allocate the available Prop 50, Round 2 grant funds.

I am an engineer so I thrive on logic ... and process ... and analysis ... and decisions that can be supported by facts and numbers. But I have learned that the way life works is not always logical and well-reasoned; if it were, none of us would be at this public meeting today because we would have long ago implemented logical, well-reasoned, factual programs to solve all our water problems.

I must say, again in commendation of your efforts, that what could be more logical than to allocate funding to those whose plan is regional and integrated to benefit all with a large return on the investment of grant monies. In fact, it would appear that the Antelope Valley's request and our application at least initially met the criteria as we were asked to submit additional information in Step 2 of this latest Round 2.

When the announcement of the recommended allocations was made, seeing nothing allocated to the Antelope Valley was a devastating blow. Many from among those who worked so hard to develop our IRWMP were, at best, deeply upset and wanted to argue for more points in the application review process. They were convinced that the Antelope Valley deserved a higher standing in the rankings announced ... they were ready to demand a recount. But we discussed – and argued – for two days and in the end, we agreed that you made rational and logical decisions in strict keeping with the fair and impartial process that you announced to all the applicants. In fact, I was the “ring-leader” who opined that we in the AV should “suck it up and work harder next time.”

Travelling this morning to attend this public meeting, however, I changed my mind, at least in part. I think the Antelope Valley does deserve reconsideration of our request ... but for what will sound to be illogical reasons. When you conclude today's public meeting and return to your offices to prepare for your next steps in helping to resolve water supply challenges of the

State, if nothing else, I hope you will remember this next thought: **“The Antelope Valley deserves to receive funding from Prop 50 Round 2 because we had to work much harder to get to our IRWMP.”**

Allow me to explain. We are not a County with centralized planning and regional purpose. We have no umbrella organization to pull us together and guide us. We are over 50 stakeholder groups who for the first time came together and argued, pleaded, and negotiated our way to a plan ... our plan. Is it perfect? Certainly not, and probably each stakeholder will identify at least one element of our plan that the stakeholder does not like. But we agreed that what we have crafted makes sense and will make a positive difference if we stick together and honor our plan.

The stakeholders were not only many, they were highly diverse. They included agencies of the federal government, State agencies, two counties, two major cities, several special districts including five major water purveyors, the Farm Bureau, the Building Industry Association, multiple mutual water companies, the chambers of commerce, environmental groups, and individual concerned citizens.

For 20 months, each month, the stakeholders met to develop a plan and a strategy because our regional water supply challenges are becoming even more challenging. Suddenly, the opportunity to apply for Prop 50 grant funds expanded the scope of our process and expedited our project focus. Again, more debate, more argument, more negotiation and evaluation until we had both an IRWMP and a long list of projects to benefit the region’s water supply by making best use of every drop of water in the Antelope Valley. We conducted fifteen community presentations across the Valley to get input from everyone who wished to speak.

Then we faced the process of formal adoption of the IRWMP by eleven elected boards and councils. Even with their involvement during the long 20 months of preparing the IRWMP, adoption was no slam dunk. There was the inevitable political rhetoric about “toilet to tap” so we convened more special workshops and brought in more experts to expand further our outreach. In the end, the vote by our elected officials – more than 50 all told – was unanimous in support of the IRWMP.

So you see, **our task was monumental** just to get to this point in the process. We still have much work to do. We formed a Leadership Team to help with implementing the IRWMP and specifically the Prop 50 Grant. The Leadership Team was also tasked to begin the thinking to form an umbrella organization in the Antelope Valley that will be our central planning and implementation agency for all regional water supply issues. We must continue to think broadly about all water supply resources and how one can be developed to the benefit of the others. We face millions if not billions of dollars investment in water projects to use most beneficially the water in our region.

DWR/SWRCB Public Meeting – Prop 50 Round 2
May 8, 2008

Ours is not always a logical world. Sometimes society benefits best by rewarding those who “finally get it.” The reward encourages them to stay focused and to remain together as they continue to pursue regional solutions to their regional challenges. The Antelope Valley – because of our Integrated Regional Water Management Plan – now “gets it.” My fear is that some of the stakeholders will be less enthused about continuing to seek regional solutions if nothing is received from the Prop 50 Round 2 grant allocations.

I simply ask that you consider our “illogical argument” and see if there might be some way to reward the Antelope Valley for our monumental achievement – a regional plan.

Thank you.