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## Contra Costa supervisors likely to reject Marsh Creek Road residents' plea for water.

By Lisa Vorderbrueggen and Thomas Peele  
Contra Costa Times

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Residents of a stretch of Marsh Creek Road who have pleaded for years to win access to an emergency water line that will pass near their rural homes may find sympathy but no votes when county supervisors consider their arguments Tuesday.

"It's probably not going to happen," Supervisor Federal Glover said of the landowners' wishes. "I think the board will listen, but we have an emergency on our hands."

Inspectors in 2007 declared a public health emergency at the Clayton Regency Mobile Home Park, a remote community seven miles southeast of Clayton that hauls its water in daily by truck and pumps it into on-site tanks for storage.

Health officers cited the possible introduction of waterborne diseases into the park's two 63,900-gallon tanks during the water-transfer process and called for an emergency waterline extension to connect the park to an existing Contra Costa Water District line that stops about three miles away.

But county and water officials say adding customers would trigger expanded environmental study, violate an existing service deal and spark a major growth fight in these rural grassy foothills.

Delays or the possibility the line may never win approval could also force the park to close and displace its 120 families, says park owner and corporate giant General Electric.

For people who live along the span between the end of a Contra Costa Water District line and the mobile home park, the prospect of watching

crews dig a trench in front of their houses for a new

waterline and being denied a hookup is ludicrous.

The 14 homes have domestic wells, but during dry summer months when the water table drops, many must truck in water.

"I'm fighting this tooth-and-nail because it makes no sense," said Rocco Covalt, a general contractor who moved into his Marsh Creek home in 2008. "We are going to get our water. We deserve water. This isn't a Third World country."

The residents found unexpected support earlier this summer when the Planning Commission upended a pipeline pact among the board of supervisors, the Contra Costa Water District and General Electric.

The 2009 agreement specified a small, 4-inch pipe and restricted water service to the mobile home park.

Contrary to the deal, the commission ordered General Electric to add the intervening landowners, resize the pipeline for "all possible uses," including fire hydrants, and pay for everything other than individual residents' construction costs.

"There is no way I am putting my fingerprints on a pipeline that passes right by people," Commissioner Richard Clark said at the June hearing. "On any level, it is unfair. It sucks. It is terrible."

The landowners suddenly had hope.

"Planning commissioners were the first ones who have had the slightest interest in us," said Ric Schiff,



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a San Francisco police sergeant who has lived on Marsh Creek Road for more than two decades. "It was a fantastic display of compassion and understanding."

But when supervisors hear project appeals Tuesday, they are likely to stick to a previous agreement that excludes the landowners.

"I feel sympathy for these residents, and I appreciate their logic," said Supervisor Mary Nejedly Piepho. "In this particular situation, we have significant extenuating circumstances that defy logic."

The houses along the pipe route fall outside the emergency declaration, a mechanism that allowed the county and park owners to proceed under a truncated state environmental review process.

A bigger pipe would alter the project and trigger a full-scale environmental analysis under state law, said Contra Costa Water District General Manager Jerry Brown.

"Once you go down that road, you will raise questions about growth-inducing impacts," Brown said. "It could be done, but it would take another two or three years."

The landowners could apply directly to the district but would have to pay the costs and overcome significant opposition.

Save Mount Diablo, an environmental group, has also appealed the commission's action, but it opposes a pipe of any size.

The area sits outside the county's growth boundary, and extending water would fuel sprawl, they argue.

In addition, the 192-space park is only two-thirds occupied but would likely become more desirable if it had a water supply, they say.

"We understand the difficult nature of this problem," wrote Seth Adams, land programs manager at Save Mount Diablo. "However, we believe the project -- particularly as now amended -- has numerous significant environmental impacts and sets a very dangerous precedent for land-use planning in the county."

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#### If you go

WHAT: Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors

WHEN: 10 a.m. Tuesday

WHERE: County administrative building, 651 Pine St., Room 107, Martinez

DETAILS: [www.co.contra-costa.ca.us](http://www.co.contra-costa.ca.us). Click on "Board of Supervisors."

Dan Rosenstrauch/Staff

Truck driver Steve Vallerga pumps water in Brentwood to deliver to the Clayton Regency Mobile Home Park along Marsh Creek Road in Contra Costa County near Clayton. A planned pipeline to the park may exclude landowners without water on its path.

Dan Rosenstrauch/Staff

A truck carries water to the Clayton Regency Mobile Home Park near Clayton.

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