

Misleading Information Attempts to Lead Community to Oppose Rate Increase

By Patrick Guasco, San Anselmo Resident and Member of the
Ross Valley Sanitary District (**RVSD**) Board of Directors

Harry Truman said “If you can’t convince them; confuse them” and I believe this is the game plan for Larkspur Councilman Dan Hillmer and others who are working hard to mislead the community about Ross Valley Sanitary District and its proposed rate increase.

The District wants to hear and consider opposing points of view and different ideas, but it’s frustrating when critics continually use false information to manipulate the public we serve. What is the point when the facts are available to anyone who chooses to review them? I know I don’t want to make a decision based on false information, and I’d be upset to find out some politician had lied to me over and over again.

Mr. Hillmer seems to have a great relationship with the Marin I.J. as his statements are never challenged. His most recent piece (6/12/11) is again full of inaccurate, misleading, and confusing information even though the facts have been presented on numerous occasions.

For example, Mr. Hillmer and his coalition of critics continually argue that RVSD has done little pipe and pump replacement, and that this suggests financial impropriety. I encourage ratepayers to take a few minutes and go to rvsd.org, and visit our newsroom where they will find a document called “Response For Marin County Board of Supervisors.” On page 24 they will discover that RVSD has replaced over 87,000 feet of pipe as well as pumps since 2006 and invested over \$26 million of ratepayer dollars back into the community.

While there, it would be valuable to check the link below it called “RVSD Receives Prestigious Account Award.” This award for Excellence in Financial Reporting underscores that we are serious about running both a responsible and transparent agency.

Please compare us with other sewer agencies in the region. Visit their websites or call them and ask them how many feet of sewer pipe they have replaced, how much money they have invested, and if they have won a CAFR Award?

Why doesn’t Mr. Hillmer’s acknowledge the success of the District’s new in-house pipe busting program which will save Ross Valley ratepayers approximately \$500,000 per year? A leading national magazine did! This story is also available in our newsroom in the Winter 2011 issue of The Pipeline.

Are Mr. Hillmer and members of his collation sincere about protecting Ross Valley ratepayers? If so, why is it that Mr. Hillmer and “prominent” members of his coalition didn’t bother to attend an RVSD meeting before launching their attack before the county

Board of Supervisors? Why haven't any of them ever tried to visit with the District's general manager, or me to discuss their concerns? I've been board President twice and I'm the current Treasurer.

I believe the answer is that Mr. Hillmer and his group have an agenda. Why aren't they outraged that Central Marin Sanitation Agency's (CMSA) treatment costs have gone up 108% in the last five years? Why don't they demand that CMSA adopt the same Proposition 218 public hearing process we must use to raise rates? He called Prop 218 "unfair," yet he's counting on it to stop us from fixing the community's pipes and pumps. It's time to ask Mr. Hillmer if he will discuss each claim with us on camera and we can produce an unedited video for the public's review.

Communities across the nation have serious infrastructure challenges to address. As a board member, my job is to protect public health and the environment. These are challenging times, but the RVSD rate increase is necessary for us to maintain our current level of operations. Please support us.