Talking points opposing a ‘Redo’ on a Trinidad water pipeline

1. We oppose Trinidad City Council reconsideration of Trinidad’s involvement in a water pipeline.

• The City Council has already voted — **twice!** (Jan. 26 and Feb. 9, 2021) — not to participate in a water pipeline project with the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District (HBMWD).

• There is no new information or argument that changes the situation that existed when the Council voted 3-2 not to participate in a pipeline project.

• **No ‘redo’!** Those who don’t like the previous legal and valid votes don’t get to demand a “redo” until they get the result they do like.

2. Concerns about the Water Advisory Committee (WAC):

• The Water Advisory Committee is comprised of four pipeline proponents and one opponent: City Council Members Richard Clompus and David Grover voted (twice) in favor of the pipeline; Planning Commissioner Cheryl Kelly has expressed support for the pipeline solution; city resident member Dwight Miller is a strong pipeline proponent; city resident member Bryce Kenny opposes the pipeline. Ex officio member City Manager Eli Naffah supports the pipeline. Last month, the committee voted 4-1 (Kenny opposed) to ask the City Council to reconsider the pipeline option.

• The Water Advisory Committee has examined various aspects of Trinidad’s water situation, but seems focused on the pipeline “solution.” Numerous proposals have been made over years for conservation, rainwater catchment and collection, new water sources, revival of the city’s Mill Creek water rights, repair to a leaking water system, development of springs and small ponds for storage, etc. Let’s focus on those.

• **Scare Tactics:** Some WAC members are using scare tactics to create a false sense of urgency and panic about joining the pipeline project “before it’s too late.” A pipeline would take many, many years (estimated at 5-15 years) to complete — permits, property easements, environmental studies, California Coastal Commission review and approval, community and resident opposition, etc. This is not an answer to current drought conditions.

3. Opposition to a pipeline “solution”:

• **‘Nuclear Option’** — A pipeline is wildly out of proportion with Trinidad’s current water resource situation or the city’s future water needs.

• The minimum HBMWD pipeline size would be a 6” line to conform with fire-suppression regulations; this size pipe could deliver more than **500,000 gallons per day** — far in excess of the requirements of Trinidad, Westhaven and the Rancheria combined. One easily foreseeable consequence is a development boom, as buildable lots that currently have no access to water become valuable commodities for construction.
• A development boom would ruin the very qualities of unspoiled beauty that residents and visitors to the Trinidad area most value.

• New development that a pipeline would make possible east of Highway 101 and north of Westhaven would require infrastructure — roads, utilities, etc. — and also would depend on septic systems in areas already prone to pollution of streams, springs and groundwater.

• Some pipeline proponents say this decision should be made only by Trinidad residents and water system customers. This is an elitist view. While the pipeline may initially serve only Trinidad city water customers, its development impacts would be felt by all area residents and visitors, north to Big Lagoon.

• **Pig in a poke:** No one has said how much a pipeline would cost or how construction and operating costs would be shared.