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January 21, 2020

Subject: The City of Ventura's Actions to Commence Groundwater Basin Adjudication

Dear Ventura River Water Right Holder,

Santa Barbara Channelkeeper is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that works to protect and restore the Santa Barbara Channel and its watersheds (including the Ventura River) through science-based advocacy, education, field work, and enforcement. We are aware that you may have recently received notice from the City of Ventura that it commenced an adjudication of water rights in the Ventura River watershed. This letter is to clarify Channelkeeper's role and goals with regard to the Ventura River.

Since 2001, Channelkeeper has been actively working in the Ventura River watershed to monitor water quality, address pollution and habitat degradation, provide environmental education, engage volunteers, and promote public recreation and access in the watershed. Through our nearly two decades of involvement in this work, Channelkeeper identified the City of Ventura's pumping from the river at Foster Park as a key detrimental impact harming endangered steelhead and other wildlife in the river. Despite Channelkeeper's extensive advocacy, the State Water Board and City of Ventura did not resolve to address this problem. As a result, Channelkeeper filed suit against these agencies in 2014 in an effort to specifically address the City's excessive pumping from its well field at Foster Park, which was consistently dewatering the river to the detriment of steelhead and other important beneficial uses of the river.

Santa Barbara Channelkeeper did NOT initiate adjudicatory procedures in the Ventura River watershed. The City of Ventura initiated the Groundwater Basin Adjudication and issued the cross-complaint against you as an owner of a water right in the Ventura River. Channelkeeper's actions up to this point have been strategically and specifically tailored to focus solely on the City of Ventura given its disproportionate impact on flows in the Ventura River. In order to avoid delay in resolving concerns with the City's over-pumping at Foster Park, Channelkeeper sought to have the City's cross-complaints against other Ventura River water right holders dismissed by the court, which it initially ordered be done. The City however appealed that ruling, and the appellate court allowed the cross-complaints to move forward.

Now that the City of Ventura has initiated an adjudication, Channelkeeper will be a party to the adjudicatory proceedings. Adjudication is a more lengthy and involved process than Channelkeeper sought to resolve issues related to the Foster Park well field, however, the process should ultimately result in a more sustainable balance between the needs of people, endangered species and other wildlife on a watershed-wide scale. In the meantime, our focus is to ensure that adequate water is left in the river until the process is completed and that the final outcome adequately provides for the ecological needs of the river. It is not Channelkeeper's role to weigh in on how water is allocated amongst users in the watershed.

The notice you have received is a procedural requirement of the adjudicatory process initiated by the City. The City's distribution list was comprehensive, but the notice should only impact you directly if you divert water from the Ventura River, have a groundwater well, or have plans to develop groundwater rights by drilling a well in the future on your property. Channelkeeper encourages you to attend one of the City's upcoming adjudication workshops to get more information if you feel you have a water right that may be affected. More information is available

on the City's website at <https://www.cityofventura.ca.gov/1449/Protecting-Local-Water-Resources>. You can learn more about Channelkeeper's work to restore flows in the Ventura River by addressing the City's pumping by visiting www.sbck.org/rtr.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KRedmond', with a stylized, cursive script.

Kira Redmond
Executive Director