

**ATTACHMENT J: LETTER FROM THE CITY OF
SACRAMENTO DEPARTMENT OF UTILITIES, THE
SACRAMENTO COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF WATER
RESOURCES AND THE EAST BY MUNICIPAL UTILITY
DISTRICT**



DEPARTMENT
OF UTILITIES

ENGINEERING
SERVICES DIVISION

CITY OF SACRAMENTO
CALIFORNIA

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July 16, 2002
020467:EC

Ranger Dave Lydick
County of Sacramento Department of Regional Parks,
Recreation, and Open Space
4040 Bradshaw Road
Sacramento, CA 95827

Dear Ranger Lydick:

SUBJECT: AMERICAN RIVER PARKWAY DOG WASTE ISSUES

This letter is written on behalf of the City of Sacramento Department of Utilities, the Sacramento County Department of Water Resources, and the East Bay Municipal Utility District that are working together on efforts to protect the quality of their respective current and future drinking water sources on the American and Sacramento rivers. Dog waste in areas of the American River Parkway is of concern to these agencies as an environmental pollutant that can add disease-causing microorganisms to the river system.

A 2001 public opinion survey conducted by the County of Sacramento Stormwater Public Education Program found that 56 percent of County residents own pets. A 1996 survey by the American Pet Products Manufacturer's Association showed that roughly 40 percent of Americans don't pick up after their pets. When Sacramento dog owners don't pick up after their dogs, the dog waste stays on the ground surface until it decomposes or is washed into the river, either directly or through the storm drain system. Within the Sacramento urban environment, the Sacramento Stormwater Management Program (including the County of Sacramento and Cities of Citrus Heights, Folsom, Elk Grove, Galt and Sacramento) conducts public education encouraging proper pickup and various individual Stormwater Program Permittees sponsor a variety of dog waste pickup programs.

Dogs generate an average 450 grams of waste per day. Dog waste consists of partially digested organic matter, water, and microorganisms. Some of the microorganisms can cause disease and



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some do not. Microorganisms carried by dogs that can cause disease in humans include:

- *Salmonella*
- *Brucella*
- *Campylobacter*
- *Leptospira*
- *Yersinia*
- *Giardia*
- *Cryptosporidium*

In addition to carrying microorganisms that can cause disease, dog waste carries microorganisms used by regulatory agencies to assess general water quality degradation. These microorganisms, namely indicator bacteria, are used to make regulatory decisions to determine whether a river is impaired for recreational use and to close swimming beaches. The Lower American River already has bacteria levels that have sometimes exceeded regulatory standards, and there is a clear increasing trend in bacteria levels from upstream to downstream along the river. Discovery Park beach has been closed once due to bacteria levels.

The agencies sponsoring this letter are concerned with the river system as a source of drinking water. While conventional treatment processes kill or remove most types of microorganisms, some, such as *Cryptosporidium*, are resistant to chlorination and are so small they can break through treatment filters.

In short, dog waste that is not picked up but is washed into the river could be a factor in increased risk of disease among Sacramento area residents who use the rivers for recreational purposes as well as drinking water customers, and could also contribute to undesirable regulatory impacts such as beach closures. If you have any questions or additional information needs regarding the water agencies' source water protection programs, please do not hesitate to contact me at 264-1424.

Sincerely,



Elissa Callman
Senior Engineer

Cc: Mike Yee, City of Sacramento
Roland Pang, City of Sacramento
Dave Brent, City of Sacramento
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