



Friends of locally owned water

NEWS

For Immediate Release: April 13, 2011

Page 1 of 2

Ojai FLOW announces plans to remove Golden State Water as Ojai's water purveyor

Ojai, California - After a 35% rate increase in 2008 and another 26% in 2011, a group of six Ojai citizens came together to investigate alternatives to Golden State Water as their water purveyor. This group is called Ojai FLOW (Friends of Locally Owned Water), named after a national movement of citizens to take control of their water.

Ojai FLOW has found that Golden State Water (Golden State) charges homes, businesses, schools, and public agencies in the Ojai service area today twice as much as what Casitas Municipal Water District (Casitas) and other local publically owned water companies in the valley would charge. In 2011 Golden State will charge \$5 million for water service and Casitas would charge \$1.89 million for the same service. Nearly all of money paid to Golden State leaves the valley whereas practically all of the money paid to Casitas is spent locally. Ojai FLOW also found that not all of the properties within the City of Ojai are served by Golden State. According to Pat McPherson, Chairman of the citizen group Ojai FLOW, "If you happen to be unlucky to be within the Golden State service area, the value of your property is less because you must pay twice as much for your water. This affects residents, businesses, and schools alike and is projected to increase 300% by 2025 if Golden State is allowed to continue to raise their water rates as they have in recent years".

After over 500 volunteer hours of in-depth investigation, Ojai FLOW has created a plan that will provide immediate water rate savings to all Ojai users served by Golden State, plus remove Golden State as the water purveyor. Ojai FLOW plans to get signatures of at least half of the registered voters served by the Golden State in Ojai, and petition the Board of Directors of Casitas to initiate proceedings to cause the following:

Community ownership...Community control...Community savings
www.OjaiFlow.com

- A. Form a revenue improvement district encompassing the Ojai service area of *Golden State*.
- B. Hold an election among the registered voters of the proposed revenue improvement district to consider issuing revenue bonds, not to exceed \$33,000,000, for the purposes of purchasing the *Golden State* water system and making needed improvements to that water system.
- C. In addition to the standard *Casitas* rates for like customers, apply a water surcharge of \$2.50 per hundred cubic foot of water on all water served in the improvement district for a period not to exceed 30 years for the purposes of serving the debt and funding needed improvements (one hundred cubic foot or CCF = 748 gallons).
- D. Replace *Golden State* with *Casitas* as the Ojai area water purveyor.

The signatures to this petition base their requests for the above actions on the following:

- I. *Golden State* is within the *Casitas* district boundaries; the residents have historically paid taxes to *Casitas*, and routinely receive supplemental water from *Casitas*.
- II. This action will result in no change in the place (where) Ojai Groundwater Basin water will be used or change in place (where) Lake Casitas water will be used, and the actions will result in no increase in overall water demand.
- III. This action will not be a burden to the existing rate payers of *Casitas*.
- IV. The average customer now served by Golden State will realize a 10%-15% reduction in annual water costs in the first year and can look forward to stable future water rates with *Casitas* as their water purveyor.

When asked what Golden State will say about this, McPherson says “Hopefully Golden State will realize that it would be to everyone’s benefit for them to cooperate with Casitas to establish a fair and equitable price. This is not an issue about public vs. private ownership. Golden State understands their business and represents the interests of their investors. They just have gone too far with their rate increases which makes the business case for change so obvious it can’t be ignored. Golden State rate payers already own and are part of Casitas, we pay taxes to Casitas, we vote in Casitas elections, we have a representative on the Casitas board, and the Golden State water system is connected to the Casitas system. It simply makes no sense to continue to pay twice as much to Golden State for water when Casitas is in place and is a much more cost effective alternative”.

Ojai FLOW encourages Ojai rate payers to find out for themselves by going to www.casitaswater.org and compare what their bill today from Golden State vs. what they will pay Casitas as the water purveyor. They say to:

- Select Monthly Bill Calculator.
- Enter Bi-monthly, Pumped, etc.
- Double the amount because the results are monthly.
- Add \$2.50 for each hundred cubic feet (CCF) – the Surcharge to buy Golden State.

The total is what the Ojai rate payer will pay Casitas in the future when it’s all done.

Community ownership...Community control...Community savings
www.OjaiFlow.com

A [flyer](#) with more information, a detail [Feasibility Study](#), free yard and business signs, where to [sign the petition](#), and where to make [donations](#) can be found on Ojai FLOW's web site www.OjaiFlow.com. For more information, you can contact Ojai FLOW by e-mail: info@OjaiFlow.com.

Page 2 of 2

#