SUBJECT: SAFE, CLEAN WATER AND NATURAL FLOOD PROTECTION

RECOMMENDATION: Support the Safe Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Plan
Support the Water District Board placing the Plan on the November 2012 ballot

Recommendation: To ensure that Santa Clara County’s families, communities, and businesses have safe, clean water into the future, the District is asking the Legislative Committee to forward a recommendation of support for the Safe Clean Water Plan to the Board of Supervisors. Additionally, the District has requested the Committee’s support in placing the measure on the November ballot. Staff agrees with these recommendations.

Background and Analysis: To ensure we have safe, clean water in Santa Clara County for years to come, the Santa Clara Valley Water District is considering placing a measure on the November 2012 ballot to renew that expiring local funding for another 15 years.

Funding from the “Safe, Clean Water” ballot measure would:

• Ensure a safe, reliable water supply
• Reduce toxins, hazards and contaminants, such as mercury and pharmaceuticals, in our waterways
• Protect our water supply and local dams from earthquakes and natural disasters
• Restore fish, bird and wildlife habitat and provide open space access
• Provide flood protection to homes, businesses, schools, streets and highways

The measure would include independent fiscal oversight and accountability, require all expenditures be published annually, include exemptions for low-income senior citizens, and require external oversight by an independent monitoring committee.

This measure would continue the special parcel tax, known as the “Clean, Safe Creeks and Natural Flood Protection Plan.” The original measure was passed by County voters in November 2000 and expires in 2016. The proposed renewal of voter-approved local funding would not increase tax rates, and would require two-thirds voter support. The ballot measure contains the continuation of the parcel tax; the “Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Plan” is the District’s blueprint for spending the funds. A summary of the Plan is attached.

To ensure that Santa Clara County’s families, communities, and businesses have safe, clean water into the future, the District is asking the Legislative Committee to forward a
recommendation of support for the Safe Clean Water Plan to the Board of Supervisors. Additionally, the District has requested the Committee’s support in placing the measure on the November ballot. The District is soliciting this support from local cities, the County, Chambers of Commerce and environmental groups.