

TAX★TALK

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AB 885 Bully-Board

The State Water Resources Control Board proposed implementation of regulations for private wells and on-site septic systems raised a storm of protests in January from tank and well owners in Placer County as well as around the State. While the WRCB has temporarily backed off its proposal and cancelled a scheduled hearing on February 9, the State “Bully-Board” has not given in. The battle against the public continues.

A somewhat similar issue reared its head from County sources in 1993 when the WRCB mandated Placer provide a more acceptable septic waste disposal than the ponds site near Roseville. The County Public Works Department, following recommendations from a \$150,000 paid consulting firm, proposed an \$8 million processing plant, charged to septic tank owners—at \$4,000 a pop.

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LEAGUE OF PLACER COUNTY TAXPAYERS

SPRING 2009

Money Fountain

The hydro power plants on Placer County’s American River spit out greenbacks from electric power sales. Currently undergoing a relicensing process this, the public’s “fountain”, must be controlled and supervised so that Placer County residents, who own it, receive the fullest benefit from this source. Currently these revenues are used to maintain and operate the power system and to retire the bonds raised to build the project.

In 2013, the bonds will be retired and the newly relicensed plant will gradually return more income than needed to operate and maintain the facility. However, there is much more infrastructure that needs to be dealt with—replacing some turbines, improving or rebuilding canals and tunnels, spillways, and other features of the distribution system.

The water distribution system, which serves much of Placer County west of Colfax with water and electric power pro-

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Our Laws Make Us Powerless

Calling for a “new era of responsibility” in his inaugural address, President Barack Obama reminded us that there are no limits to “what free men and women can achieve.” Indeed. America achieved greatness as the can-do society. This is, after all, the country of Thomas Paine and barn raisings, of Grange halls and Google. Other countries shared, at least in part, our political freedoms, but America had something different — a belief in the power of each individual. President Obama’s clarion call of self-determination — “Yes We Can” — harkens back to the core of our culture.

But there’s a threshold problem for our new president. Americans don’t feel free to reach inside themselves and make a difference. The growth of litigation and regulation has injected a paralyzing uncertainty into everyday choices. All around us are warnings and legal risks. The

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Bull in the Toy Shop

Last year’s scare over contaminated toys made in China has resulted in Congress leaping to “rescue” children from possible lead contamination with legislation made without thinking of the effects on toy shops, and juvenile book and clothing stores.

The measure, effective February 20, 2009, requires *all* products aimed at children under 12 years old to be certified as safe and virtually lead-free by *independent testing*. This burden may be manageable by large manufacturers and retailers that can absorb the cost of discarded inventory and can also afford to hire more lawyers. But the rules of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) apply retroactively to toys and clothes already on the shelf. These will have to be thrown away if not certified as safe.

Large retailers may ask manufacturers to take back uncertified products, but small, independent stores will be stuck with in-

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