

Bringing you HOPE -
Helping Our Peninsula's Environment

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Carolina Garcia
Monterey Herald

August 30, 2007

Hello Carolina,

I appreciate the Herald reporting on the Moth Spray meeting last evening. However, HOPE has two non-trivial concerns about the article.

1. Objective Failures

a. The article played up the agency's claims of no harm (at least 4 paragraphs), but entirely failed to mention that the USDA admits the newly appreciated "moderately toxic" character of the chemicals to aquatic invertebrates. This includes abalone (already endangered) and crabs (Sea Otter food).

HOPE not only highlighted this in our remarks, we gave Mr. Howe a copy of our letter (attached) with this as the top item and gave the exact reference to the USDA disclosure. HOPE also had two people on stage hold up a 3 foot by 2 foot poster with the large words "moderately toxic" underlined so the entire audience could see.

The article failed to mention this is a toxicity increase from what was previously publicly known ("slightly toxic" was in Royal's editorial).

b. Failure to mention National Marine Sanctuary announced their withdrawal of approval from sign-off to concern because the state changed the area to be sprayed to include the Sanctuary without notifying them. National Marine Sanctuary is now concerned about streams accumulating the chemicals and depositing them in our bay - perhaps because of the now known "moderate toxicity" to aquatic invertebrates.

c. The article also failed to mention that Mr. Shimek was the only person to speak in favor of the spraying among a parade of dozens - perhaps as many as 60 - who spoke against it, some angrily and others with fear.

d. Failure to mention that virtually everyone opposed to the spraying, supported alternatives. In fact the only alternative the article mentioned is more harmful than spraying.

Note: The first 2 hours of the meeting were entirely used by the three agency staff defending the pesticide spraying. The TV, as well as your reporter, failed to stay for the bulk of public comment which ended at 11:15. (Seems almost designed to bias the reporting. In fact City Manager Meurer told me the agency, not the city, set the agenda at a City Meeting.)

2. Persistent Refusal to Mention I Speak for HOPE

At public meetings Mr. Howe routinely verbally belittles my work to me - as he did again before last evening's meeting. This attitude for our work shows up in his persistent, and now

Founded in 1998, and known for helping with hundreds of environmental and democracy successes, H.O.P.E. is a non-profit, tax deductible, public interest group protecting our Monterey Peninsula's natural land, air, and water ecosystems and public participation in government, using science, law, education, news alerts and advocacy.

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intentional, failure to mention I am speaking on behalf of HOPE when he quotes me – even though I always identify my remarks as speaking on behalf of HOPE.

All your other reporters report HOPE's role, but with a single exception, Mr. Howe has persistently refused to. I have written to him (email with return receipt) but he refuses to respond or correct this.

Howe's article mentioned Mr. Shimek as Executive Director of his little known organization; and when Sierra Club spokespeople are quoted, Sierra Club is mentioned as is the case with every other non-profit and many which are not non-profits.

HOPE received its (difficult to achieve) 501(c)3 tax-deductible non-profit status from the IRS in 2002. I am indeed HOPE's Executive Director and have been since 2002 when I was hired by our Board of Trustees. (Just for reference, Sierra Club is NOT a 501(c)3 tax-deductible non-profit because they lost it in the 1960s for supporting political candidates.)

The LA Times manages to mention my remarks are on behalf of HOPE as does the UK Independent, France's Liberation and dozens other media. Even the New York Times mentions HOPE rather than merely me.

Only Kevin Howe in my hometown paper (and the Pine Cone's Paul Miller) refuses to mention HOPE.

Is omitting the efforts of a successful, hard working, non-profit organization something a newspaper can be proud of?

With my best wishes,

David Dilworth