

May 31, 2023

Regarding the Tacherra Ranch project:

I am in full support of a solution to the ongoing housing problem at the Tacherra Ranch. The residents of this ranch are our friends, our children's classmates, and cherished members of our community. They are also human beings who deserve the common decency that safe housing provides.

This problem has persisted through decades. The Tacherra Ranch housing was red-tagged by Marin County Code Enforcement in 2000 but anecdotal evidence supports that the problem existed as early as the 1970's and beyond. The time for a solution is now - it is beyond time.

Unfortunately, I am not confident that the current project presented by the BCLT will meet the needs of these residents. I fear that the accumulated cost of this enormous undertaking will eventually lead to monthly rents beyond reach, resulting in housing that is not in fact "affordable". I remain open to be convinced otherwise but until then, my hope is that we might work together as a community to find a BETTER solution to meet the Tacherra residents' immediate and future needs.

Tonight we will be discussing our town's water scarcity and whether or not the BCPUD can assure the amount of water necessary for the Tacherra project proposal. The decision made tonight will determine the feasibility of this project but it will also have enormous ramifications for all future decisions the BCPUD makes regarding water use in Bolinas. I am eager to hear how interpretations of current BCPUD formulas could assure the requested water amount *and* uphold the water moratorium. My hope is that this is possible, but my research indicates that it is not.

According to my reading of the Bolinas Water Moratorium, my review of the 1984 Pacific Legal Foundation lawsuit, extensive discussions with current and former BCPUD Board members, and outside legal perspectives, each signal that if the BCPUD assures the requested amount of water for the Tacherra Ranch project, the Bolinas Water Moratorium will be broken.

The essential and resounding question that must be resolved is how can the current BCPUD Board assure a daily water usage of approximately 1,740 gal/day for the current Tacherra Ranch project, when in 2000 (before the drought and predictions of mega-droughts) the BCPUD could not assure 1,280 gal/day. This is close to 500 gal/day MORE than what was denied over 20 years ago. What changed?

Please convince me with evidence how this can work. I am truly eager for some possibility that I might have missed, because everything I see is an alarming contradiction.

On Tuesday 5/23, Nate McCarthy and the 10-12 residents on his property who have consistently gone 10 gal/day over their 249 gal/day water allotment, were warned by the BCPUD that their water meter may be terminated. Please explain how this is not a contradiction.

When I look over Google Earth Bolinas maps I see multitudes of Big Mesa encampments that may also need more water. Will the BCPUD also assure these if they are deemed “emergencies”?

What about outside developers who now have a road map on how to skirt regulations in Bolinas (including the Water Moratorium, county zoning, agriculture and environmental protections, etc.)? Will the BCPUD also be forced to assure their requests as well?

The truth of the matter is that the BCPUD **cannot** assure these amounts because there is not enough water. Simple as that. Bolinas water scarcity is a fact, has been proven in court, and is based on clearly presented scientific data.

If the BCPUD assures this amount for the Tacherra Ranch project, they will no longer be able to enforce their own rules. This will be the end of the Water Moratorium.

Additionally, if assured, the Tacherra Ranch water meter will be the most vulnerable water meter in Bolinas because it will have been stretched well beyond its limit. Stringent daily water rationing will be required of the Tacherra residents and without the built in cushion to weather times of conservation, the Tacherra residents will be further exposed to unnecessary hardship during times of drought. This is a cruel perpetuation of their current suffering and completely unacceptable. We can do better, and we NEED to do better.

I urge the BCPUD to NOT decide tonight. Take your time and absorb the questions being raised by the community. A project of this magnitude and consequence is a massive responsibility and will have huge implications for the future of Bolinas. We must get this right.

Let's lower the temperature, press pause, and come together as a community to solve this problem. The Tacherra residents deserve a feasible and LIVABLE solution that will keep them safe and secure into the future. They deserve this respect.

In the meantime I urge community members to contact the County to demand the IMMEDIATE solution to the residents current living situation. The County has failed them for over twenty years and our friends, neighbors, and loved ones at the Tacherra Ranch should not be exposed to these deplorable conditions for one second longer. Enough is enough. The County has an available shower trailer and a voucher system in place for emergencies. Why aren't these being used? Bolinas also has plenty of beautiful STR's that can accommodate the Tacherra residents and the County should foot the bill.

Respectfully,
Mollie Lounibos