



Watsonville Wetlands Watch

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“Dedicated to protecting, restoring and appreciating the wetlands of the Pajaro Valley”

March 18, 2023

Planning Commission
City of Watsonville
250 Main Street
Watsonville, CA 95076

**Subject: Proposed Beer Distribution/Warehouse Facility on Manabe-Ow Road; Permit
Application 2138; APN 18-711-29**

Dear Members of the Commission,

Watsonville Wetlands Watch (WWW) appreciate Planning staff's responses to our previous comments and the ongoing dialogue related to our questions and concerns that relate to the ecological health of Watsonville Slough and the related project impacts associated with this project. Our previous letter to staff dated, February 24, 2022, is incorporated into our project comments by reference.

WWW recognizes that since adoption of the Manabe-Own Business Park Specific Plan (MOBPSP), the City and developers have developed projects within the Specific Plan area that have contributed several important efforts toward the restoration and enhancement of Watsonville Slough. We thank you for the long-term partnership that has resulted in important environmental and community benefits on this portion of the City.

WWW continues to feel that it is important that the City continues to take measures to protect and ensure the highest possible water quality within the slough and approve projects that are resilient to changes in climate over time; especially those that may impact wetland habitats and water quality. We recognize that the project meets the minimum standards for water quality treatment where detention basins have been designed to treat stormwater run-off from the project and that the project has incorporated some low impact development measures. However, we believe the measures incorporated may be inadequate given the wetland habitats directly downstream and the increased storm strengths associated with climate change. The storm events of this past winter are one example that demonstrates designing to current minimum standards is not always adequate to protect the existing developed and natural environments.

Given the important habitats within Watsonville Slough, there is value and merit to incorporating additional low impact development measures within this project and projects like these that are located in close proximity to local wetlands and riparian areas. We offer our partnership and collaboration toward these efforts if there is any interest in continued pursuit of this by the project proponent.

In addition to that identified above, we hope the City might consider continued collaboration with WWW and other regional partners in the further enhancement of Watsonville Slough directly to the west of the project

footprint, where the wetland occurs within City owned property or rights-of-way. This work is identified in the Watsonville Slough System Conservation and Enhancement Plan. We would look forward to further collaboration in the development of this work.

Sincerely,

Donna Bradford

Donna Bradford

President of the Board of Directors

Watsonville Wetlands Watch

cc: Suzi Merriam, Community Development Director
Matt Orbach, Principal Planner