



March 17, 2020

For Immediate Release:

Casitas Municipal Water District
Withdraws from the Attorney-Led Mediation
in the City of Ventura Groundwater Lawsuit

In a recent closed session of the Board of Directors of the Casitas Municipal Water District, the Board of Directors unanimously decided that Casitas shall withdraw from the current mediation with the plaintiff, the City of Ventura.

This decision was made due to the following concerns:

- As a defendant in this case, Casitas' Board of Directors must consider its strategy on an ongoing basis and cannot allow attorneys or other parties' attorneys decide what is best for the District and its constituents.
- During the month of January 2020, in opposition of and contrary to the understanding of a collaborative approach, the City of Ventura's attorneys unilaterally delivered thousands of legal notices, creating confusion and angst for the District and its customers.
- During the week of March 9, 2020, the City of Ventura's attorneys once again unilaterally delivered thousands of notices to the District's customers with claims not reviewed nor supported by Casitas, thereby demonstrating a lack of good faith.
- With the Court's inclusion of State of California agencies in the case, the City of Ventura's promise of a local solution is false, misleading, and disingenuous.
- Issues such as Pueblo Rights and other unsubstantiated claims included in the original complaint from the City of Ventura are of significant concern to Casitas.

- Despite twelve months of attorney-led mediation expense, no agreement exists nor is anticipated that is even remotely acceptable to Casitas.

While Casitas understands that litigation is a costly alternative to mediation, a mediation process that is not fully collaborative and produces outcomes unacceptable to the interests of Casitas' customers would be even more costly for current and future generations.

Casitas will continue to review and update its legal strategy. As a foundational step, Casitas will be presenting a Public Records Act request to the City of Ventura.

Nevertheless, Casitas encourages and invites the City of Ventura to dismiss its costly groundwater case and schedule a meeting of the principals of both entities in order to develop a truly collaborative solution.

In conclusion, this attorney-led mediation has failed and will not ultimately produce mutual benefit for the public.