Santa Clara Valley Water District
Environmental Creek Cleanup Committee
5700 Almaden Expressway
San Jose, CA 95123

May 15, 2024

Subject: Opposition to Item 4.1 - Proposed Water Resources Protection Zones Ordinance

Dear Members of Valley Water District Environmental Creek Cleanup Committee,

Amigos de Guadalupe Center for Justice and Empowerment writes in strong opposition to Item 4.1, the Proposed Water Resources Protection Zones Ordinance, as it unjustly penalizes unhoused individuals when there is nowhere near enough shelter available in Santa Clara County to properly house everyone. This type of criminalization can best be understood as a policy response that attempts to address homelessness by penalizing people who lack housing, and lacks the dignity and empathy all individuals deserve.

We also look at the unintended additional harm that this proposed ordinance can cause for unhoused individuals. A 2020 Oxford Academic study found that criminalization of the unhoused can actually make housing less accessible, and “perpetuates homelessness” by “systematically limiting homeless people's access to services, housing, and jobs, while damaging their health, safety, and well-being.”

As a community nonprofit that operates 3 interim housing developments and 5 safe park sites, we understand the need for creative solutions to addressing our housing crisis, and this ordinance is not one of them. We hope we can collaborate with Valley Water District and other agencies to find solutions that are more dignified. Therefore, we urge the Committee to vote “No” on the proposed ordinance.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to continuing to work together to create a just and equitable society for all families in Santa Clara County for years to come.

Warm regards,

Maritza Maldonado
Founding Executive Director
Amigos de Guadalupe Center for Justice and Empowerment