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12	Attorneys for Defendant and Cross-Complainant CITY OF SAN BUENAVENTURA	EXEMPT FROM FILING FEES PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 6103
13	CITTOF SAN BUENAVENTURA	10 GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 0103
14	SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA	
15	COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES	
16	SANTA BARBARA CHANNELKEEPER, a	Case No. 19STCP01176
17	California non-profit corporation,	Judge: Hon. William F. Highberger
18	Petitioner,	DEFENDANT AND CROSS-
19	V.	COMPLAINANT CITY OF SAN BUENAVENTURA'S RESPONSE TO
20	STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD, et al,	BRIEF IN LIEU OF OFFER OF PROOF BY ANDREW K. WHITMAN, ET AL.
21	Respondents.	
22	CITY OF SAN BUENAVENTURA, et al.,	Date: March 11, 2022
23	Cross-Complainant,	Time: 9:00 a.m. Dept.: 10
24	V.	Action Filed: Sept. 19, 2014
25	DUNCAN ABBOTT, an individual, et al.,	Trial Date: March 16, 2022 (Phase 1 Trial)
26	Cross-Defendants.	
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Defendant and Cross-Complainant City of San Buenaventura (Ventura) submits this response to the brief served by Andrew K. Whitman, Heidi A. Whitman, Nancy L. Whitman, and John R. and Nancy L. Whitman Family Trust (Whitman) on March 2, 2022 in lieu of the offer of proof requested by the Court.

## I. THE WHITMAN BRIEF FAILS TO RESPOND TO THE COURT'S REQUEST FOR AN OFFER OF PROOF AND IMPROPERLY SEEKS TO REARGUE **DECIDED ISSUES**

At the February 25, 2022 further trial readiness conference, the Court stated the following:

THE COURT: I would take an oral offer of proof now or give you the chance to give me a written offer of proof by the middle of next week as to what you want to prove about the City's pueblo rights, or the lack thereof, that's germane to the upcoming trial.

It's not obvious to me that I can see how it fits into what we're trying to adjudicate. But, in fairness, I think you should be able to give your offer of proof.

What you'll offer of proof is – and then I want a written response from the City as to whether they would stipulate to any of the things that you've put in your offer of proof as being conceded for the limited purposes of phase 1 trial, as opposed to something that is contested factually.

And so far as what I'm attempting to do is ration where the scarce resources are applied in order to have as cost-effective and legally and factually sound a trial as possible. And, at the moment, this to me seems like something so collateral that it really ought to wait until April when the trial is hopefully behind us and then pick it up. (Emphasis added.)<sup>1</sup>

Rather than providing an offer of proof as requested by the Court, Whitman has filed an argumentative and factually unsupported brief that repeats legal positions that this Court has already rejected for purposes of Phase One through its rulings on the three recent motions for judgment on the pleadings filed by the City of Ojai, the Garrison Group, and Whitman (Motions). For example, in ruling on Ojai's and Whitman's Motions, the Court decided that, subject to proof

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> As of the filing of this response, Ventura had only a rough draft, rather than certified, copy of the transcript of proceedings for February 25, 2020 and excerpted this language from that rough draft. Ventura will supplement with the certified transcript upon receipt, if necessary.

of interconnection in Phase One, Ventura has standing as a downstream water rights holder, regardless of the status of its pueblo/treaty rights.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the Court decided that, subject to proof of interconnection in Phase One, Ventura may bring its Sixth Cause of Action for a comprehensive adjudication and physical solution under the Comprehensive Adjudication Statute as to the four basins and the Ventura River Watershed as alleged. (See Notices of Ruling filed February 1, 2022 and February 23, 2022.) None of these rulings depend on Ventura's allegations regarding pueblo/treaty rights, and Whitman has no basis to reargue these decisions now, when the Phase One Trial is merely twelve days away. Other than rearguing decided issues, Whitman's brief does not provide any new reason why the technical questions of how Ventura has pled pueblo/treaty rights in the Third Cause of Action are germane to the Phase One issue of interconnection or why they cannot wait until after the Phase One issue is determined to be addressed. As explained below, there are multiple reasons why these collateral pleading issues should be addressed after Phase One.

# THERE ARE MULTIPLE REASONS WHY ADDRESSING THE PLEADING OF II. PARTS OF THE THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION SHOULD OCCUR AFTER THE PHASE ONE TRIAL

There are multiple reasons why addressing the technical pleading concerns, raised for the first time in the Whitman reply<sup>3</sup> to Ventura's opposition to his Motion for Judgment on the Pleadings as to the Sixth Cause of Action, should wait until after the conclusion of Phase One. These reasons include:

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<sup>2</sup> See transcript of proceedings for January 20, 2022 a p. 32:6-11:

MR. HAGERTY: IF WE GET TO THIS, THIS WILL BE A

SEPARATE PHASE OF TRIAL. AND THAT'S THE WAY WE WOULD REQUEST

THAT IT BE TEED UP. BUT, AGAIN, YOUR HONOR, EVEN ABSENT

PUEBLO RIGHTS, THERE IS NO QUESTION ABOUT OUR STANDING. WE --

<sup>10</sup> WE HAVE THE RIGHT UNDER THE COURT OF APPEAL DECISION --

THE COURT: YOU DON'T NEED TO PERSUADE ME OF THAT.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> In that reply brief, Whitman focused on one sentence of paragraph 107 of the Third Amended Cross-Complaint that was made on "information and belief." However, the allegations of the Third Claim for Relief (paragraphs 123-128) are not made on "information and belief." This pleading question has not been fully briefed, is not properly before the Court on a noticed motion, and has not been the subject of a final decision of this Court. While Ventura believes that its proposal below will resolve any potential issue regarding these technical pleading concern, it does not concede that a pleading defect exists.

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- There is no motion to strike pending related to Whitman's technical pleading concerns, and the time period set by the Court for hearing all motions (other than motions in limine) prior to Phase One elapsed on January 21, 2022. (See Amended Notice of Ruling filed November 4, 2021 at Ex. A, Revised Discovery and Pre-Trial Schedule for Phase 1 Trial.) Whitman could have brought such a motion at any time prior to that date, but elected instead to file a Motion for Judgment on the Pleadings.
- There is insufficient time prior to the Phase One Trial date to file a noticed motion to strike. Such a noticed motion should be brought, if at all and if necessary, after the Phase One Trial. Because of the unnecessary distraction from the Phase One Trial that this unrelated issue would cause (and has unfortunately already caused), Ventura would oppose any attempt to bring such a motion prior to Phase One.
- Whitman appears to be seeking a summary adjudication of Ventura's Third Cause of Action, contending that, without a proper motion pending, the Court should "determine" whether Ventura has a "legitimate claim." (Whitman Brief, p. 2:9-11.) The time to bring a motion for summary judgment/adjudication prior to Phase One elapsed on November 3, 2021. Whitman could have brought such a motion, but elected not to do so. He cannot bring such a motion now, although he could bring such a motion after Phase One is completed, if necessary.
- Whitman has not filed a notice of intent to participate in the Phase One Trial, nor has he sought relief from the Court for the failure to do so. Because the Whitman parties are not participating in the Phase One Trial, the Court, in the judicious allocation of scarce resources, should not consider their untimely and procedurally improper arguments regarding technical pleading issues as Ventura and other parties prepare for and engage in the Phase One Trial. Parties who have elected not to participate in the Phase One Trial should not be permitted to delay it or to interfere with its clearly-defined scope.

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- The sole remaining bifurcated issue in Phase One is interconnection. Interconnection is a threshold issue for each cause of action, including the Third Cause of Action. In contrast, the technical pleading issues Whitman has raised about parts of the Third Cause of Action are *not* threshold issues to the question of interconnection. There is therefore no reason to address them prior to Phase One. Phase One will not determine water rights (and indeed there has been no discovery on such matters because discovery has been stayed except for the Phase One Trial issues) but instead will only determine the threshold issue of interconnection in the
- The results of Phase One may influence the scope of all of Ventura's claims, and may require amendment of the Cross-Complaint after Phase One is completed. As described below, Ventura is willing (without conceding any defect in its current pleading) to amend the Third Cause of Action to address the concerns raised by Whitman, who would then be free to challenge the Third Cause of Action, if desired, through a proper and timely motion. This is a much more efficient way to address the concerns.

#### III. VENTURA'S PROPOSED SOLUTION

Watershed.<sup>4</sup>

The Court asked Ventura to file a written response stating whether it can stipulate to anything that Whitman provides in his offer of proof. Since Whitman did not provide an actual offer of proof, there is nothing to which Ventura could stipulate, even if it were willing to do so. However, Ventura proposes the following solution that should be more than sufficient good cause to defer these technical pleading questions until after the completion of Phase One, while also preserving the rights of the parties to address these issues later:

> As previously offered to Whitman through the meet and confer process, Ventura will agree to amend the Third Amended Cross-Complaint forty-five (45) days after

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Determining boundaries and extent of the water resource being litigated is an "essential" first phase of water rights adjudications in order to adjudicate water rights claims "in later proceedings." (See Antelope Valley Groundwater Cases (2021) 62 Cal.App.5th 992, 1006, reh'g denied (Apr. 6, 2021), review denied (July 21, 2021).)

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the issuance of the decision in the Phase One Trial to conform to the Court's decision, and to address the technical pleading issues Whitman has asserted regarding parts of the Third Claim for Relief. Specifically, Ventura will address the concerns regarding portions of the allegations that are incorporated into the Third Claim for Relief being made on "information and belief," and will add additional supporting factual allegations to the currently alleged facts in the Third Claim for Relief, including additional factual allegations regarding compliance with the claims perfection process under the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo and through the United States Court of Claims. After reviewing Ventura's amended pleading, Whitman could then raise any arguments thereon in a timely manner through a proper motion.

The Phase One Trial is and will be limited to the sole remaining bifurcated question of interconnection, and will not involve a determination of water rights, including the water rights alleged in the Third Claim for Relief. Those issues will be addressed, if necessary, through a separate phase of trial regarding the issues asserted in the Third Claim for Relief.

### IV. CONCLUSION

Whitman did not respond to the Court's request at the February 25, 2022 further trial readiness conference for an offer of proof and instead reargues decided issues. There are multiple reasons to defer the technical pleading concerns Whitman has raised regarding allegations incorporated by reference into the Third Claim for Relief until after completion of Phase One Trial. Although Whitman has not provided any facts or suggestions that Ventura could even consider stipulating to, Ventura proposes a reasonable and efficient solution that allows the participating parties to proceed with Phase One while preserving these issues raised by this nonparticipating party for determination in an orderly fashion after the completion of the Phase One Trial.

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### PROOF OF SERVICE

I am a resident of the State of California and over the age of eighteen years, and not a party to the action herein; my business address is Best & Krieger LLP, 2001 N. Main Street, Suite 390, Walnut Creek, CA 94596. On March 4, 2022, I served the following document(s):

DEFENDANT AND CROSS-COMPLAINANT CITY OF SAN BUENAVENTURA'S RESPONSE TO BRIEF IN LIEU OF OFFER OF PROOF BY ANDREW K. WHITMAN, ET AL.

- by placing the document(s) listed above in a sealed envelope with postage thereon fully prepaid, in the United States mail at Walnut Creek, California addressed as set forth below. I am readily familiar with the firm's practice of collection and processing correspondence for mailing. Under that practice it would be deposited with the U.S. Postal Service on that same day with postage thereon fully prepaid in the ordinary course of business.
- I caused such envelope to be delivered via overnight delivery. Such envelope was deposited for delivery by United Parcel Service following the firm's ordinary business practices.
- by transmission via **E-Service to File & ServeXpress** to the person(s) set forth below. Local Rules of Court 2.10 (P).
- By e-mail or electronic transmission. I caused the documents to be sent to the persons at the e-mail addresses listed below. I did not receive, within a reasonable time after the transmission, any electronic message or other indication that the transmission was unsuccessful.

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16	Partnership; and Southern California Edison	Joseph Clark and Linda Epstein Family Trust;
17	Company	Michael I. Cromer and Jody D. Cromer; Michel A. Etchart, Trustee of the Michel A.
18		Etchart Separate Property Trust, and Mark W. Etchart, Trustee of the Mark W. Etchart
19		Sepertate Property Trust; Lawrence Hartmann; Ole Konig; Krotona Institute of
		Theosophy; Stephen Michtell and Kathleen
20		Reid Mitchell, Trustees of the Stephen Mitchell and Byron Katie Trust; North Fork
21		Springs Mutual Water Company; Stephen
22		Robert Smith, Trustee of the Charles R. Rudd and Lola L. Rudd Trust, dated May 20, 2976;
		Shlomo Raz; Sylvia Raz; Senior Canyon
23		Mutual Water Company; Siete Robles Mutual Water Company; Soule Park Golf Course,
24		Ltd.; Telos, LLC; Victor C. Timar, Jr. Trustee
25		of the Timar Family Trust; John Town; Trudie Town; Asquith Family Limited Partnership,
26		Ltd.; Burgess Ranch; Cary Cheldin; Cynthia Daniels; Wayne Francis; David Friend; The
		Larry & Pat Hartmann Family Trust; The John
27		N. Hartmann Trust; Gary Hirschkron; Cheryl Jensen; Lutheran Church of the Holy Cross of
28		Oisi California: Ianica Sattler (Minea): Fitan

Ojai, California; Janice Sattler (Mineo); Eitan

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Nightingale Family Trust; Heide C. Kurtz, Trustee of The Kurtz Family Trust Dated January 19, 2019; Randall Leavitt, Trustee of The Randall B. Leavitt 2010 Trust; Edward C. Leicht and Jacqueline M. Leicht, Trustees of The Leicht Family 2013 Revocable Trust Dated March 1, 2013; Paul Lepiane and Bengtson Bo; Robert Levin and Lisa Solinas, Trustees of The Levin Family Living Trust; Francis Longstaff and Shauna Longstaff, Trustees of The Longstaff Trust Dated October 11, 2018; Mandy Macaluso, Trustee of The Living Trust of Mandy Macaluso: Marilyn Wallace, Trustee of The Marilyn Wallace Separate Property Trust; Daniel J. McSweeney and Yoko McSweeney; Wendell M. Mortensen and Laura L. Mortensen, Trustees of The Mortensen Family Revocable Trust; Timothy Jerome Murch and Jody Caren Murch, Trustees of The Jodim Family 2007 Trust Dated July 31, 2007; Chris E. Platt and Hanh H. Platt; Robert Erickson, Trustee and Ronald Wilson; Michael D. Robertson and Kimberly A. Robertson, Trustees of The Robertson Family Trust; James P. Robie, Trustee of the Robie Family Trust; Petter Romming and Kimi Romming, Trustees; Marc Saleh, Trustee of The Saleh Family Trust; Konrad Stefan Sonnenfeld, Trustee of The Konrad Stefan Sonnenfeld Living Trust; Mark Sutherland, Trustee of The Sutherland Marital Trust; John H. Thacher and Caroline H. Thacher, Trustees of The Thacher Family Trust Dated January 2004; Gilbert G. Vondriska and Carolyn J. Vondriska, Trustees of The Vondriska Living Trust; William D. Rusin, Sr., Trustee of the William D. Rusin Sr. Revocable Trust; Oscar D. Acosta, Trustee of the Acosta Trust; Chris E. Platt and Hanh H. Plat; Deborah Lys Martin Crawford; Diane Syvertson, Trustee of the Diana Syvertson Living Trust; Erica J. Abrams, Trustee of the Erica J. Abrams Trust; Frank Clay Creasey Jr.; Frederic DeVault; Gilbert G. Vondriska and Carolyn J. Vondriska, Trustees of the Vondriska Living Trust; James P. Robie, Trustee of the Robie Family Trust; John H. Thacher and Caroline H. Thacher, Trustees of the Thacher Family Trust dated January 2004; Mandy Macaluso, Trustee of the Living Trust of Mandy Macaluso; Margot J. Griswold; Mark Sutherland, Trustee of the Sutherland Marital Trust; Randall Leavitt, Trustee of the Randall B. Leavitt 2010 Trust; Raul E. Alvarado and Hildegard M. Alvarado, trustees

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1 2		of the Alvarado Family Trust; Sumeet Bhatia and Michael McDonald; Timothy Jerome Murch and Jody Caren Murch, Trustees of the
3		Jodim Family 2007 Trust dated July 31, 2007; Wendell M. Mortensen and Laura L. Mortensen, Trustees of the Mortensen Family
4		Revocable Trustees; William Armstrong and
5		April Nardini; William Erickson; Rancho Sueño, LLC; James and Andrea Pendleton;
6		Wayne Tate and Janice Priebe-Tate, Trustees of the Tate Trust, as Community Property;
7		Susan K. Capper, Trustee of the Capper Trust Dated August 28, 2003, Roe 42;
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8	Valley School; Sharon Hamm-Booth and David Robert Hamm, Co-Trustees of The	
9	Hamm 2004 Family Trust Dated April 29, 2004; Reeves Orchard, LLC; and Ojai Valley	
10	Inn, Edward J. Conner, Edward J. Conner, Trustee of the Edward J. Conner Trust, Roe	
11	56; Friend's Ranches, Inc.; Finch Farms,	
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19		Gramckow individually; Martin Gramckow, Trustee of the Monika G. Huss Irrevocable
20		Trust, Trustee of the Karin W. Gramckow Irrevocable Trust, and Trustee of the Kurt J.
21		Gramckow Irrevocable Trust
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9	Nicholas and Jess E. Long as Trustees of the	
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11	Jeffrey E. Barnes Chief Assistant County Councel	Scott Slater
12	Chief Assistant County Counsel Jason Canger	Bradley Herrema Christopher Guillen
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