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Letters to the Editor

Keep process public

The Cambria Community Services District Board of Directors has taken actions recently which serve to curtail citizen involvement. One of these was the elimination of public comments from being recorded in the minutes of meetings. As a supposed "cost saving" measure, the board decided to only have the formal decisions made by the board recorded in the minutes.

The open comments of up to three minutes by citizens at the beginning of each meeting will no longer become part of the recorded minutes, nor will the discussions taking place prior to decisions being made.

The amount of money saved in secretarial time to record our commentaries is insignificant if looked at aside the enormous amounts of funds spent on projects that citizens have little control, or no control, over, such as the amount spent on lobbyists who may even be working towards projects that citizens find questionable, such as the proposed desalination plant or the cutting down of eucalyptus trees on Fiscalini Ranch Preserve.

There are other measures taken by the CCSD which limit their transparency and curtail citizen involvement. One of them is naming the budget or finance committee and the executive committees of the board declared "ad hoc." This means that the public will not have access to these important committee meetings.

A third such measure with enormous implications for the future of our beloved Cambria was declaring the desalination project to be solely under the jurisdiction of the Army Corps of Engineers. By making this declaration, the CCSD was giving away citizen access to a project which could have devastating effects on our environment and which would be extremely costly. By making this declaration, the CCSD hope to evade laws enacted by our elected representatives intended to protect our environment.

It is my hope that the CCSD directors will realize that they are there to increase and facilitate community involvement, not cut it off.

Valerie Bentz *Cambria*