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**EDITORIAL**

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## Drawing the line

Congressman Doug Bosco's plan to turn the Laguna de Santa Rosa into a national wildlife refuge was unveiled only a week ago and already the infighting has broken out among local environmentalists. The combat is over talk of year-round releases of treated sewage into the Russian River.

Some well-meaning Laguna preservationists claim the highly-treated wastewater that would be used as a summertime "enhancement" of the Laguna is clean, safe and won't harm the River. That sounds suspiciously like Santa Rosa talking.

This plan may sound clean, but it's definitely not fair. Asking the lower River residents to live with year-round discharge is an affront to River residents who have fought (and endured) years of River abuse due to past mismanagement of the regional Laguna Wastewater Treatment Plant. The River's resort and recreation economy has still not fully recovered from the damage.

At this point, year-round discharge could mean the economic kiss of death for River businesses, and would probably provoke new and expensive lawsuits. Year-round discharge is a bad idea, and should be shelved before it causes any more dissension.

The preservation of the Laguna as a healthy and protected wetlands and wildlife habitat is a tremendous and worthwhile goal, but it will take a consensus of environmental groups to make it happen. Saving the Laguna by sacrificing the lower River is not the way to do it.

A healthy Laguna and a healthy River economy must not be mutually exclusive. It's as simple as that.