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## **Thornton residents win records request**

A group of Thornton residents won a legal victory in its effort to examine records kept by a reclamation district that protects their community from floodwaters.

San Joaquin County Superior Court Judge Bob McNatt ruled most of the objections by Reclamation District 348 to the requests were invalid under the California Public Records Act.

The district objected to turning over records to "malcontents," according to the ruling, and refused the records requests because they were vague and burdensome.

McNatt, however, ruled the district's arguments were weak.

"Government agencies have a responsibility to maintain their records in such a manner as to facilitate locating records requested under the CPRA," McNatt wrote in his Oct. 3 ruling. "If an agency can't even supply for inspection a copy of its own internal policies for such things as how meetings are to be held, something appears wrong with the way in which records are kept."

McNatt gave Reclamation District 348, which repairs and maintains levees around Thornton, 20 days to produce and make available all its records since 1990, with a few exceptions outlined by public records laws.

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