

We can see no need to construct a dam at Cerro Blanco. This project is unnecessary in terms of water management, is unjust in social and territorial terms, and will have a high and



irreparable environmental impact. In addition it contravenes the European Union Water Framework Directive (WFD 2000/60/EU) that specifies that we must return our rivers to a "good ecological state" by the year 2015.

The people of the Guadalhorce Valley and of Sierra de las Nieves are not selfish:

The irrigators of the Guadalhorce have received no water in recent summers, water they had already paid for but were unable to access so that Malaga City would have adequate supplies.

More than 30,000 inhabitants of the Guadalhorce Valley have had water restrictions for up to 12 hours a day this summer, while in the provincial capital lawns were watered with drinking-water. Despite this, water infrastructure managers did not divert a drop of water from the Guadalhorce dams whose pipelines pass by the towns that have undergone restrictions.

Malaga, whatever happens, will always have the sea - the water that we have is our future. Our only possibility for future developments can not be taken away from us! Our culture, our heritage, our identity can not be wiped out!

It is this project that is selfish, as it creates division between the different people who make up Malaga province. We are all people of Malaga! We are all people of the Rio Grande!



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What is the project?

Who does it affect?

What alternatives exist?

Coordinadora en defensa de Río Grande

**For a new
attitude to water**

What is the project?

The construction of a seven metre high dam to stop the flow of the Rio Grande, diverting it into a pipe of 1.62 metres in diameter with the capacity to transfer 150% of the total annual flow of the river. There would be a 38 kilometre pipeline, with an adjacent service road, all the way from Cerro Blanco, between Guaro and Coín, to the Water Treatment Plant in Atabal, Malaga. The road and pipeline would cross the citrus orchards of 500 families irrevocably destroying this natural heritage.

The original project promises to take only 23% of the volume (about 20 cubic hectometres) although in the Feasibility Study it is made very clear that they may take “as much as is considered necessary”. They promise to maintain an ecologically sustainable river flow but the volume that is already being extracted is too great to maintain the river and the wells of the towns that depend on this supply. (Study of García Jalón). The project promises to only extract water between October and April, but in Aljaima, Cártama, there is already a dam that catches 16 Hm³/year. The greater part of this volume comes from the Rio Grande and the rest from the Rio Guadalhorce and this dam already extracts the river’s winter flow before it arrives at the sea.

In addition it is clear that this project is an “advance payment” for the construction of a much larger dam and reservoir at Cerro Blanco. This project does not consider the provision of water for irrigation nor allow for the consumption of towns that obtain their existing supplies from the Rio Grande. It is very clear that the water is for Malaga and the Costa del Sol.



Who does it affect?

People living in the Sierra de Gibralfra, Villafranco del Guadalhorce, Cerralba, Zalea, Pizarra and Cártama. More than 30,000 people who are supplied with drinking water from wells replenished by the Rio Grande. The orchards of Guaro, Coín, Cártama and Pizarra. The more than 2,500 hectares downstream from the proposed dam site that are irrigated with water from the Rio Grande. The valuable cultural and ethnical heritage that is an essential component of the culture of Malaga province. All the inhabitants of Malaga City and Malaga Province who enjoy using this river in their leisure-time: weekenders, bird-watchers, hikers, fishermen, sportsmen, etc. A unique ecosystem, an authentic, biodiverse, green corridor that connects the Sierra de las Nieves National Park, a UNESCO Biosphere, with the mouth of the Rio Guadalhorce, in Malaga City, which is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

What alternatives exist?

Increased efficiency in conduction and storage infrastructures:

The capital of Malaga, according to official statistics loses 30% in its pipe networks. Of the 66 Hm³/year which enters the network, practically 20 Hm³ are not used but lost due to leakages. This is exactly the amount that they propose to extract from the Rio Grande. Why are these improvements not undertaken?

The Casasola dam, according to the Andalusian Water Agency, can contribute 14 Hm³/year. Why is it not being used after its supposed high financial cost?

The correction of the saline spring problem in the Guadalhorce Reservoir which, according to A.G.U.A. programme of the Ministry of the Environment, could contribute an additional 50 Hm³/year to the system. Why has this work, whose contact has already been awarded, not been immediately undertaken? We can find no adequate explanation.

Increased efficiency in water use and consumption:

According to D. Antonio Rodríguez Leal, President of the Andalusian Mediterranean River Basin, 12 to 15% (8 to 10 Hm³) of the Malaga water supply is consumed in irrigations of gardens. This information is taken from Drought Management Committee Report of 27th September 2006. Why is half the amount of water that the Rio Grande scheme would produce wasted in watering lawns? Why is nothing done about this? Why not adapt gardens to the Mediterranean climate with native species which have low water consumption? Indeed, why use drinking-water to water gardens, when recycled “grey” water could be used instead?

Recycling of Waste Water

The Andalusian Water Agency, in an article published on the 19th November 2006 in Málaga Hoy, calculates that 60 Hm³ of untreated water is discharged into the sea every year. Why aren’t the works necessary to purify and reuse this water undertaken before destroying one of the few living rivers in the province?

Adjustment of land-use to the local climate.

The project feasibility study states: “The proposals will assist development in the service sectors of tourism, water sports and golf courses. Why must we lose our orchards and drinking-water to enable unsustainable and indiscriminate development?”

Desalination using renewable energy.

According to the Ministry of the Environment, a desalination plant with an annual capacity of 20 Hm³ is going to be constructed in Mijas with a budget equal to that of the Rio Grande project (57 million euros). Also, the Marbella desalination plant, acquired this same year, cost only 60% of the budget of this project. Why hasn’t this alternative, less detrimental to the whole region, not been considered?