

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: STEP Newsletter - please continue printed format in water bills!
Date: Monday, June 19, 2023 3:36:21 PM

Hello Sebastopol City Council,

I am writing to support the excellent and important STEP newsletter. Please continue to include the printed newsletter in the Sebastopol water bills. I also ask that you support the proposal offered by Editor & Lead Writer Patricia Dines. Her approach will keep this essential part of the STEP program while cutting costs by 40% and essentially eliminating the 10 to 15 staff hours for this project.

The original vision for STEP, when it was created by the Sebastopol City Council in 2000, was to do educational outreach to the entire community. I joined the STEP editorial team in 2006, and have been grateful and honored to help implement this vision. STEP is a powerful tool for city residents, providing well-informed, relevant, and inspiring information that aids in eliminating our daily use and exposure to toxic substances.

A printed newsletter has key advantages over an online version. First, it reaches every home that gets a water bill. This includes people who would not know that the online version exists, or even think about searching for it. Second, people pay more attention to physical mail, so the information is more likely to be noticed. Third, a physical newsletter can be kept and shared more easily within a household. This old-school method of communication has significantly more impact and reach than a digital version.

The printed newsletter has been created entirely by volunteers such as myself. It is an incredible bargain for the City. It has an 85-90%+ approval rating every year. And people repeatedly tell us that they appreciate and use this information to notably reduce their use of toxics, and share it with others. Local people I do not know at CVS and my dentist have recognized my name and thanked me for participating in the newsletter.

I know you are doing your best to make good decisions for Sebastopol. As the City website mentions, "We're a very special city . . . because we enjoy the active participation of citizens interested in improving our excellent quality of life." Please stay true to the original City Council vision of a printed newsletter created by volunteers to reach out to all the community.

Jim Gleaves