



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: CEO/PW Water Agency
Department No.: 012/054
For Agenda Of: August 22, 2017
Placement: Departmental
Estimated Time: 15 minutes
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors and Board of Directors, Water Agency

FROM: Department Director(s) Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer
Scott McGolpin, Director Public Works

Contact Info: Tom Fayram, Deputy Director, Public Works
Richard Morgantini, Fiscal & Policy Analyst

SUBJECT: Response to 2016-2017 Grand Jury Report: Managing Regional Water Supplies

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Consider and adopt responses in Attachment A as the Board of Supervisors' response to the 2016-2017 Grand Jury report entitled "Managing Regional Water Supplies, Are There Better Solutions?", Attachment C;
- b) Authorize the Chair to sign the letter included in Attachments A and forward the letter and responses to the Presiding Judge of Santa Barbara County Superior Court; and
- c) Determine pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act Guideline 15378(b)(5) that the above actions are not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act review because they are organizational or administrative activities that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes to the environment.

That the Water Agency Board of Directors:

- d) Consider and adopt responses in Attachment B as the Water Agency Board of Directors' response to the 2016-2017 Grand Jury report entitled "Managing Regional Water Supplies, Are There Better Solutions?", Attachment C;
- e) Authorize the Chair to sign the letter included in Attachments B and forward the letter and responses to the Presiding Judge of Santa Barbara County Superior Court; and
- f) Determine pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act Guideline 15378(b)(5) that the above actions are not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act review because they are organizational or administrative activities that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes to the environment.

Summary Text:

This item is on the agenda in order to provide responses to the Grand Jury's report on Regional Water Supplies. The Grand Jury has requested responses from the Board of Supervisors and the Water Agency Board of Directors.

On June 13, 2017, The Santa Barbara County Grand Jury (Grand Jury) released a report entitled "Managing Regional Water Supplies, Are There Better Solutions?" The following summarizes the Grand Jury's review.

The Grand Jury's Report provides the following summary:

The 2016-17 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury (Jury) conducted an investigation into the serious problem of drought within the County. Historically, Santa Barbara County has been a drought-prone area of California. Although there was considerably above average rainfall this winter, Lake Cachuma is still only 51 percent full, which can seduce many into thinking that the drought is over.

The State Water Project was intended initially to provide a supplemental supply of water. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), part of the Department of the Interior, owns the dam and reservoir at Lake Cachuma (Lake), the heart of the system. The Cachuma Operation and Maintenance Board (COMB), a joint powers agency, was formed to operate the surface water distribution system from the Lake to the coastal communities and the upper Santa Ynez Valley.

While there are many sources of water available in the County, managed by a multiplicity of water purveyors, there is inadequate coordination among them. The Jury advocates the designation of the Santa Barbara County Water Agency as the lead agency in implementing water policy throughout the County.

The Board of Supervisors is named as a responder to Findings 1, 2, and 6 as well as Recommendations 1, 2a and 6.

The Board of Directors of the Santa Barbara County Water Agency is named as a responder to Findings 1, 5, 6 and 9 as well as Recommendations 1, 5, 6 and 9.

Background:

The Grand Jury report considers three topics/questions:

- Adequacy and reliability of the present water delivery system
- What steps can be taken to provide additional sources of supply
- Is there a better way to manage a regional supply system

The Grand Jury Report provides the following conclusion:

Santa Barbara County has a long history of building past its available water resources. Although the immediate threat of not having sufficient water available from Lake Cachuma has been averted because of the recent rains, another sustained drought occurring remains just a matter of time.

The State Water Pipeline does not carry an adequate supply for the needs of the south county. It was always intended as a supplemental source. The 2016-17 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury finds that additional water sources could be developed. The 2013 Integrated Regional Water Management Plan confirmed this. However, the implementation of its vision to use additional desalination projects and new infrastructures for using recycled water, among other things, is not being pursued aggressively because currently there is no entity with the authority to mandate implementation.

Further, the Jury finds that the self-interests of individual water purveyors have hampered efforts to secure a more sustainable regional supply.

Therefore, there must be an independent, impartial and forward-thinking agency (and not a water purveyor) with the authority to fulfill three objectives:

1. Assist all water agencies throughout the County to secure Federal and State grants that enable these purveyors to generate additional sources and employ more efficient systems for delivery;
2. Manage the Lake Cachuma water supplies to the south coast and secure the long-term reliable delivery of that water to purveyors;
3. Set priorities for management for all water resources in the County.

The Santa Barbara County Water Agency comes closest to being that independent, impartial, forward- thinking agency capable of achieving these three objectives. The Santa Barbara County Cooperating Partners already recognizes the SBCWA as the lead agency.

The Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors must aggressively encourage the United States Bureau of Reclamation to designate the Santa Barbara County Water as the agency

to manage Lake Cachuma's water supplies when the Lake Cachuma contract is renewed in 2020.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: NA

There are no fiscal impacts associated with responding to the Grand Jury's report.

Fiscal Analysis:

NA

Special Instructions:

1. As per Recommendation B and E, please forward the original signed letters and responses to the Presiding Judge of Santa Barbara County Superior Court.
2. Please send copies of the signed letters and a copy of the minute order to Richard Morgantini, Fiscal & Policy Analyst, County Executive Office and to the Water Agency office, Attn: Christina Lopez.

Attachments:

- Attachment A - Response from the Board of Supervisors to the Presiding Judge of Santa Barbara County Superior Court
- Attachment B - Response from the Board of Directors of the SBC Water Agency to the Presiding Judge of Santa Barbara County Superior Court
- Attachment C - 2016-17 Grand Jury Report entitled "Managing Regional Water Supplies, Are There Better Solutions".

Authored by:

Thomas D. Fayram, Deputy Public Works Director
Richard Morgantini, Fiscal & Policy Analyst, County Executive Office