



**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: 5th District - BOS
Department No.: 011
For Agenda Of: 10/12/10
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Tme: N/A
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Board Member Joseph Centeno, Fifth District Supervisor, 346-8400
Contact Info: Scott McGolpin, Public Works Director, 568-3010

SUBJECT: Letter of Support for Twitchell Reservoir Downstream Sediment Cleanout, 5th District

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: No

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: No

Other Concurrence: N/A

As to form: No

Recommended Actions:

Approve and authorize the Chair to sign letters of support to Congresswoman Capps and Congressman Gallegly regarding the Santa Maria Valley Water Conservation District's proposed emergency downstream sediment cleanout in order to restore functional ability of the reservoir to release water.

Summary Text:

The Santa Maria Valley Water Conservation District is pursuing permits to excavate sediment downstream of Twitchell Dam. The Conservation District in fact has declared an emergency on the project to ensure work is complete by this winter.

Sedimentation has been a growing problem at Twitchell Reservoir. During releases, some sediment is sluiced downstream. The river channel downstream of the dam has had increased accumulation of sediment as well. The sedimentation has now caused a back up in the area of the dam's toe drain and into the dam release works. As such, operation of the dam is problematic not only for flood flow releases, but for routine conservation releases as well.

The remedy for this impact is relatively simple. The Conservation District is proposing a pilot channel immediately downstream of the dam to restore the channel that will allow releases to be made and the toe drain to be visible.

The Conservation District has requested the support of the County and the Cities of Santa Maria and Guadalupe. Attached are letters of support that will be sent to our federal congressional representatives to urge federal funding of the work and expedited permitting. In addition, staff will be in contact with the Corps of Engineers regarding the permitting for the work.

Background: Twitchell Dam and Reservoir were constructed by the United States Bureau of Reclamation for two principal purposes: conservation of water for groundwater recharge and flood control. Since the completion of its construction in 1958, the reservoir has accumulated sediment at an average annual rate of 1,200 acre-feet per year, more than twice the rate designed for the reservoir. There are several reasons for the increased sediment rates, including Wildland Fires in the Los Padres National Forest of which sediment flux has not been mitigated. Sediment has accumulated below the Dam Outlet Works to a point where water will not flow through the area properly. Currently, operational releases cannot be made without flooding and sedimentation impacts to the toe drain resulting in not being able to determine volume of seepage and clarity of such seepage (a critical function for earthen dams), potential flooding to the improved caretaker property area, and potential plugging of the outlet works tunnel itself. Cleanout costs far exceed the Water Conservation District's budget on a season by season basis. In order to restore functional ability of the Dam to make operational releases, the cleanout of sediment and restoration of a pilot channel for the water and sediment to flow must be made.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: No

Narrative:

The Santa Maria Water Conservation District operates Twitchell Dam under the oversight of the Bureau of Reclamation and the US Army Corps of Engineers. Additionally, the recently formed Twitchell Management Agency (TMA) assists in funding and operational improvements at the Dam.

Staffing Impacts:

Legal Positions:

FTEs:

Special Instructions:

Direct the Clerk of the Board to return copies of the signed letter of support along with a copy of the minute order to the Flood Control District office, Attn: Christina Lopez.

Attachments:

Letters of Support

Authored by: Dennis Gibbs, Hydrologist Senior, 739-8781