

# SANTA BARBARA COUNTY BOARD AGENDA LETTER



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

**Agenda Number:**  
**Prepared on:** 4/4/06  
**Department Name:** Parks  
**Department No.:** 052  
**Agenda Date:** 4/18/06  
**Placement:** Administrative  
**Estimate Time:** 0  
**Continued Item:** NO  
**If Yes, date from:**

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**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Terri Maus-Nisich  
Assistant CEO & Interim Parks Director

**STAFF CONTACT:** Coleen Lund, Parks  
ext. 2470

Rob Almy, Public Works  
ext. 3542

**SUBJECT:** Execution of an Interim Agreement Regarding the Surcharge of Lake Cachuma and the Protection of Recreational Resources at the Lake, Third Supervisory District

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## Recommendation(s):

That the Board of Supervisors and Santa Barbara County Water Agency Board of Directors authorize the Chair of the County Board of Supervisors to execute the proposed interim agreement following approval by the Cachuma Conservation Release Board (CCRB) and the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No. 1 (ID No. 1). This agreement is regarding an interim surcharge of Lake Cachuma to 753 feet for the water year 2005-2006.

## Executive Summary and Discussion:

This item on the agenda is to consider execution of an interim agreement to allow for a surcharge, (increase in lake level), of Lake Cachuma to 753 feet, from the current approved level of 752.47 during water years 2005-2006. The item is presented at this time due to two key factors: 1) Abundant rainfall in late March and early April of 2006 have caused Lake Cachuma to fill and spill thus triggering higher release obligations for CCRB under the Federal Biological Opinion issued in 2002 and, 2) The recommended action would allow the Cachuma Member Units to maximize the full amount of surcharge water needed to provide for fisheries releases under a Federal Biological Opinion, which, if not available, would otherwise have to be provided from project water supply utilized for irrigation and municipal uses. Furthermore, the opportunity to pursue a surcharge occurs only as long as water inflow to the reservoir exceeds releases and evaporation. These conditions are only likely to exist until late April.

## Interim Agreement Regarding Surcharge at Lake Cachuma

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The Board has heard at previous hearings the potential impact of the full 3 foot surcharge on park facilities, including but not limited to the immediate effects on the existing water treatment plant and boat launch facilities. In January of 2004, the County agencies as well as members of the CCRB came together to prepare a Statement of Agreement and implementing MOU designed to address three public policy issues: 1) Ensuring stable water supply 2) Providing for enhancement of endangered resources 3) Providing for recreational amenities, as well as for a five year timeline for the County to relocate critical and essential park operational facilities and for CCRB to fulfill their obligations for the surcharge as mandated by a Federal Biological Opinion. The implementing MOU was adopted by the County Board of Supervisors on February 10, 2004. As additional information was made available, the parties to the agreement revisited the issue of how much surcharge could occur without damage to park facilities. In April of 2005, the Board of Supervisors took action to allow for the increase of lake level to 752.47 as well as provided for improvements to the parks facilities. These improvements were constructed and funded by the CCRB and The Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District No. 1 (ID No.1) to guard against potential impacts resulting from a temporary lake surcharge. These modifications seem to provide adequate short-term protection to park facilities to allow temporary surcharge to a full 753 elevation.

As stated above, amendments to the original MOU were approved by your Board in April 2005. Given the amount of rainfall experienced recently, the CCRB again approach the County to consider the opportunity to take Lake Cachuma to full surcharge of 753 feet, before 2009, for this rainy season only, thus allowing the retention of an additional 2,200 acre feet of water. This allows the member units of the CCRB to maximize the full amount of surcharge water needed to provide for fisheries releases under the Biological Opinion. If this water were not available it would otherwise have to be provided from project water supply utilized for irrigation and municipal uses. Furthermore, the opportunity to pursue a surcharge occurs only as long as water inflow to the reservoir exceeds releases and evaporation. These conditions are only likely to exist between mid April to early May.

In May of 2005 the County Parks Department was able to observe actual conditions with a lake level of 753 feet. It appeared that under *still lake* conditions the water treatment plant was not compromised to the degree originally predicted. Therefore, additional detailed survey elevations of all Cachuma facilities were then prepared by surveyors retained by ID #1. These elevations appear to indicate that the Cachuma facilities have more leeway at the 753 elevation than anticipated. (It was originally determined that the water treatment plant was situated at 755; rather it is at 756.3.) Although this is still within the three foot wave run-up impact zone and susceptible to damage, the Parks Department is satisfied that the lake can sustain the 753 surcharge for the proposed interim period without compromising County facilities.

The attached interim agreement provides for an increase in lake level to the 753 level on a one time basis (during Water Year 2005-2006) before the 2009 date provided by the amended MOU currently in effect. Under the proposed interim agreement, all other provisions of the current MOU remain in effect. The CCRB and the Santa Ynez Water District are each scheduled to sign the agreement by April 25, 2006.

**Mandates and Service Levels:**

No mandate or impact to service levels with this action.

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

The estimated cost to address all recreational facilities impacted as a result of the anticipated surcharge is presently estimated at \$12 million. To date the County has secured \$3.1 million to address impacted facilities. Assistance in funding for impacted facilities, including the water treatment plant, and sewer lift stations, are subject of a formal request facilitated to the Federal Government. The search for grants other funding sources and partnerships is a priority work effort for the County Parks Department. The increase in lake level to 753 will allow for boat launching operations to continue except in adverse weather conditions. It is not anticipated that revenues pertaining to the launch ramp will be impacted.

**Special Instructions:** Clerk of the Board to provide copy of minute order to County Parks, attn.; Coleen Lund.

**Concurrence:**  
County Counsel

**Attachments:** Interim Agreement for increased Surcharge

**INTERIM AGREEMENT REGARDING THE SURCHARGE OF LAKE  
CACHUMA FOR WATER YEAR 2005-2006**

This Interim Agreement is effective upon execution by all of the parties hereto and is entered by and between the County of Santa Barbara (“County”), the Santa Barbara County Water Agency (“Agency”), the Cachuma Conservation Release Board (“CCRB”), and the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No. 1 (“I.D. No. 1”).

WHEREAS, rains occurring in late March and early April 2006 have provided an opportunity for the United States Bureau of Reclamation (“Reclamation”) to store additional water behind Bradbury Dam to meet the regulatory obligations of the Cachuma Project while protecting the water supplies provided to County residents by I.D. No. 1 and the members of CCRB.

NOW THEREFORE, the County, the Agency, CCRB and I.D. No. 1 do hereby jointly agree that they will immediately request Reclamation to modify its Cachuma Project Guidelines for Operation to provide surcharge to 753.0 feet elevation at Lake Cachuma during water year 2005-2006. Except for this change, this Interim Agreement does not modify the Amended Memorandum of Understanding Regarding the Surcharge of Lake Cachuma and the Protection of Recreational Resources at the Lake entered into by the parties in April, 2005.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Santa Barbara County Water Agency

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Cachuma Conservation Release Board

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Jan Abel, President

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District,  
Improvement District No. 1

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Harlan Burchardi, President

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved as to Form:  
Stephen Shane Stark  
Agency Counsel

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Deputy Counsel