



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: Public Works
Department No.: 054
For Agenda of: February 6, 2024
Placement: Departmental
Estimated Tme: 30 min
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Directors, Santa Barbara County Water Agency
Board of Directors, Laguna County Sanitation District

FROM: Department Scott D. McGolpin, P.E., Director, (805) 568-3010
Director(s)
Contact Info: Walter Rubalcava, Deputy Director-Water Resources, (805) 568-3436
Martin Wilder, P.E., Deputy Director, (805) 882-3605

SUBJECT: Countywide Potable Reuse Study and Laguna County Sanitation District
Groundwater Recharge Evaluation – All Supervisorial Districts

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: N/A

As to form: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Directors of the Santa Barbara County Water Agency and the Board of Directors of the Laguna County Sanitation District:

- a) Receive and file two potable reuse studies entitled *Countywide Potable Reuse Evaluation* dated October 2023, and *Groundwater Recharge Evaluation* prepared by Carollo Engineers dated August 2023; and,
- b) Find that the proposed action does not constitute a “Project” within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act, pursuant to 14 CCR 15378 (b)(5), in that it is a government administrative activity that will not result in direct or indirect changes in the environment.

Summary Text:

This item is on the agenda in order to receive and file the above *Countywide Potable Reuse Evaluation* (Attachment A) and *Laguna County Sanitation District Groundwater Recharge Evaluation* (Attachment B) studies. The countywide study evaluated potable reuse potential and will be used to update the Water Agency’s 2015 Long Term Supplemental Water Supply Alternatives Report. The Laguna County Sanitation District report assesses the feasibility of plant improvements to implement Indirect Potable Reuse (IPR) that would serve to benefit the Santa Maria Valley groundwater supply in the Orcutt area.

Background:

On September 13, 2022, the Water Agency Board of Directors directed staff to evaluate opportunities for potable reuse of wastewater in Santa Barbara County. The Water Agency subsequently contracted with Carollo Engineers to produce the Countywide *Potable Reuse Evaluation*, a high-level study that documents and summarizes what each of the wastewater treatment utilities in the County are doing regarding treatment (wastewater and advanced processes) and the end use of that water (water reuse, effluent disposal, including both location and volume). In addition, four potential potable reuse projects were evaluated at a higher level of detail, considering both IPR and direct potable reuse (DPR). These four projects included individual projects at the City of Buellton and City of Solvang, a combined project for the two cities, and a project for the Summerland Community Services District (CSD). In response to additional questions raised in the Summerland portion of the study, additional research will be conducted in collaboration with Summerland CSD, Montecito Water District, and Montecito Sanitary District. The information in the Potable Reuse Evaluation provides critical guidance to agencies throughout the County as they navigate challenges in both disposing of wastewater and developing local, drought-proof water supply portfolios.

Within the County Public Works Department, an agency-specific IPR feasibility study was authorized on September 13, 2022 by your Board acting as the Board of Directors of the Santa Barbara County Water Agency to assess IPR feasibility for the Laguna County Sanitation District. The Water Agency retained Carollo Engineers to assess reclamation plant improvements needed to create a new supply of potable water through IPR that would serve the Orcutt area. This study analyzed specific plant improvements, demonstrated how the recharge system could be constructed, and developed decision-level cost estimates. The study presents two alternatives with cost ranges based on various levels of infrastructure improvements with ranges in capital costs from \$8.4 million to \$32 million and annual operating costs ranging from \$1.2 million to \$2.4 million. The main difference in the two options is the volume of water produced, which varies between 450 AFY and 2,000 AFY. Plant improvements for the two alternatives varies between only changing the existing reverse osmosis system that currently treats a portion of the flow and improving the entire plant facility. Recharge alternatives of purified water are also discussed that include shallow well injection and percolation ponds.

To further assess logistical issues in implementing an actual IPR project, on August 22, 2023 your Board acting as the Board of Directors of the Laguna County Sanitation District executed a subsequent agreement with Carollo Engineers to further study detailed requirements to implement a groundwater recharge project that include a groundwater injection model, prepare a U.S. Bureau of Reclamation grant funding report, consider mechanisms for wholesaling or retailing the purified water, and provide guidance to address water quality permit limits. Funding for this work is from American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds in the amount of \$300,000.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

There are no fiscal impacts with this action.

Special Instructions:

Please route a certified minute order to:

- Santa Barbara County Water Agency, attention Christina Lopez
- Laguna County Sanitation District, attention Martin Wilder

Attachments:

Attachment A: *Countywide Potable Reuse Evaluation*

Attachment B: *Laguna County Sanitation District Groundwater Recharge Evaluation*

Authored by:

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