



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:** Water Agency  
**Department No.:** 054  
**For Agenda Of:** 10/14/14  
**Placement:** Administrative  
**Estimated Tme:** N/A  
**Continued Item:** No  
**If Yes, date from:**  
**Vote Required:** Majority

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**TO:** Board of Directors, Water Agency

**FROM:** Department Scott D. McGolpin, Public Works Director, 568-3010  
Director(s)  
Contact Info: Thomas D. Fayram, Deputy Public Works Director, 568-3436

**SUBJECT:** **Cloudseeding Program 2014-15, All Supervisorial Districts**

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**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Other Concurrence:** Risk Management and  
Planning & Development  
As to form: Yes

**Recommended Actions:**

- a) Approve the 2014-2015 cloudseeding program and authorize the Chair to execute the agreement with North American Weather Consultants (NAWC) (not a local vendor) for cloudseeding for the period of October 14, 2014 through June 30, 2015 unless earlier terminated, in an amount not to exceed \$319,850;
- b) Consider an addendum to the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) 13NGD-00000-00011 <https://santabarbara.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=1488396&GUID=8B49D500-ED74-4C50-BB4A-AEDBCBA813BE> which the Board adopted on October 15, 2013; and
- c) After considering the MND and the addendum to the MND, determine pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15162(a) that no subsequent EIR or Negative Declaration is required for this project because: 1) No substantial changes are proposed in the project which require major revisions of the MND; 2) No substantial changes have occurred with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken which require major revisions of the MND; and 3) No new information of substantial importance concerning the project's significant effects or mitigation measures, which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time that the MND was adopted in has been received.

**Summary Text:**

The agreement with NAWC provides for a ground and aerial based cloudseeding program, similar to programs conducted during the last 33 years (excluding the 1985-1986 winter after the Wheeler Fire and the 2007-2008 winter after the Zaca Fire). The program was bid this year as a “professional services contract” with an option to re-hire the contractor without re-bidding for three years. NAWC is recommended for award of the contract based on two bids submitted, both from outside the local area. There are no local cloudseeding vendors. This year's proposed program targets the Twitchell Reservoir Watershed and the Lake Cachuma Watershed. Ground and aerial seeding delivery methods will be utilized this year. Special suspension criteria have been established to avoid any undesirable effects from the program, especially areas that burned between 2007 and 2009. The South Coast and other urban areas are never targeted, only backcountry watersheds behind major reservoirs. Seeding operations can be conducted beginning November 15 given suitable conditions.

### **Alignment with other River System interests and Safety concerns**

When it is apparent that Twitchell Reservoir or Lake Cachuma will fill or flows on the Cuyama or Santa Ynez River and other tributaries that feed into the Reservoirs approach significant volume, seeding operations immediately cease. The program includes operational constraints designed to preclude or limit seeding effects over flood sensitive areas. Only backcountry areas behind major reservoirs are targeted, no urban areas are seeded. The Flood Control District's existing storm-monitoring capabilities are augmented by the meteorological monitoring services provided by the contractor's certified meteorologist using sophisticated radar capability. As a standard practice, the Flood Control District retains final decision-making authority over all seeding operations for safety reasons. The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) states that current cloudseeding projects should be continued. Policy statements by both the American Meteorological Society in 1998 and World Meteorological Organization in 2007 support the effectiveness of winter orographic cloudseeding projects.

### **Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act**

On October 15, 2013, your Board approved Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) 13NGD-00000-00011 pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines. The Planning and Development Department reviewed the proposed 2014-2015 program and made the finding that CEQA Guidelines Section 15164 is applicable. CEQA Guideline Section 15164 allows an addendum to be prepared when only minor technical changes are proposed in the project or changes which would not create new significant impacts. This year's program incorporates minor changes which restrict cloudseeding operations and related impacts to levels less than those of past programs. Thus no additional review is required.

### **Background:**

The cloudseeding program uses state of the art methods accepted by the Department of Water Resources to augment rainfall in designated target areas by injection of silver iodide into the cloudmass. Acting as artificial condensation nuclei, the Silver iodide promotes the formation of raindrops in addition to those forming by natural processes. Cloudseeding has long been recognized as a cost effective supplemental water supply alternative and, for that reason, has been an ongoing operational program of the County Water Agency since 1981. Due to its ideal setting for certain types of operations, Santa Barbara has been the focus of numerous cloudseeding Research programs dating back to the early 1950's. Local research programs have been sponsored by the University of California, National Science Foundation, U.S.

Forest Service, Naval Weapons Center China Lake, U.S. Weather Bureau, and the National Science Foundation.

Currently, Twitchell Reservoir is empty and has approximately 105,000 acre-feet of water conservation pool storage space available. Twitchell Reservoir reclaims storm runoff for recharge of the Santa Maria Groundwater Basin. Lake Cachuma currently has over 130,000 acre-feet of storage space available.

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

Budgeted: Yes

**Fiscal Analysis:**

<b><u>Funding Sources</u></b>	<b><u>Current FY Cost:</u></b>	<b><u>Annualized On-going Cost:</u></b>	<b><u>Total One-Time Project Cost</u></b>
General Fund			
State			
Federal			
Water Agency Funds	\$ 162,346.00		
Local Water Districts	\$ 162,346.00		
Total	\$ 324,692.00	\$ -	\$ -

**Narrative:**

The program cost continues to be 50/50 cost share between the Water Agency and the participating local water districts with the Water Agency staff providing administration of the project. This arrangement is considered equitable because the areas in the county located outside of water districts' service areas derive much of the benefit from the cloudseeding program. The costs of the program identified in the above table consists of contractor cost, lease sites for ground seeding, and some other small associated costs such as association memberships.

This program was included in the 2013-2014 Adopted Budget under the Water Resources Division of the Public Works Department as identified on page D-226 in the budget book.

No General Fund monies will be utilized with this program.

**Special Instructions:**

Direct the Clerk of the Board to send two originals of the Agreement with NAWC and a copy of the minute order to the Water Agency office, Attn: Christina Lopez

**Attachments:**

- Agreement for Services of Independent Contractor w/NAWC(3 originals)
- Contract Summary
- CEQA Determination from Planning and Development

**Authored by:** Dennis Gibbs, Hydrologist, Sr., 739-8781