



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: 10/15/13
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Tme: N/A
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

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: Cloud Seeding Program 2013-14, All Supervisorial Districts

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 2013-2014 cloud seeding program and authorize the Chair to execute the agreement with North American Weather Consultants Inc. (not a local vendor) for cloud seeding for the period of November 15, 2013 through June 30, 2014 unless earlier terminated, in an amount not to exceed \$307,375;
- b) Make the required California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) findings for the Santa Barbara County and Twitchell Reservoir Cloud Seeding Program and adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) 13NGD-00000-00011 for the Santa Barbara County and Twitchell Reservoir Cloud Seeding Program and the Mitigation and Monitoring Plan included in MND 13NGD-00000-00011 for this program, pursuant to CEQA Guideline Section 15074;
- c) Approve and authorize the Chair to execute the original and duplicate original Lease Agreement for Cloud Seeding Site to lease of a portion of APN 153-280-021 located on West Camino Cielo, with Rincon Broadcasting LLC for meteorological monitoring and the operation of cloud seeding equipment for the period of November 1, 2013 through October 31, 2014 in the amount of \$1,200 with an option to renew the lease on an annual basis for up to five years; and
- d) Approve and authorize the Chair to execute the original and duplicate original Lease Agreement for Cloud Seeding Site to lease of a portion of APN 113-190-001 located on Mt. Lospe, with Mr. Earl

Dolcini for meteorological monitoring and the operation of cloud seeding equipment for the period of November 1, 2013 through October 31, 2014 in the amount of \$1,500 with an option to renew the lease on an annual basis for up to five years.

Summary Text:

The agreement with North American Weather Consultants, Inc. (NAWC) provides for a ground and aerial based cloud seeding program, similar to programs conducted during the last 32 years (excluding the 1985-1986 winter after the Wheeler Fire and the 2007-2008 winter after the Zaca Fire). In 2011, the program was bid as a “professional services contract” with an option to re-hire the contractor without re-bidding for three years. NAWC was awarded the contract with two bids submitted, both from outside the local area. There are no local cloud seeding vendors. This year's proposed program targets the Twitchell Reservoir Watershed located in San Luis Obispo County and the Lake Cachuma Watershed on the Santa Ynez River. 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.

The attached Renewal Lease Agreements will secure the existing favorable land based seeding sites for the upcoming rain year. Existing land lease sites need to be renewed as they are very difficult to re-establish once lost. These sites are utilized for ground based cloud seeding operations. Thus, the contracts for recently re-negotiated sites should be executed.

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) labels cloud seeding as a “safe and effective means of augmenting local water supplies”.

Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act

Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) 13NGD-00000-00011 was circulated for public comment from August 1, 2013 through September 16, 2013 and the environmental hearing was held in Santa Barbara with opportunity for remote testimony in Santa Maria on August 20, 2013. These comments are attached to the MND. Per CEQA standards, the comments do not trigger a need for preparation of an EIR because the comments do not provide substantial evidence that the program may have a significant effect on the environment which cannot be mitigated or avoided.

Background:

The cloud seeding program uses state of the art methods accepted by DWR to augment rainfall in designated target areas by injection of silver iodide into the cloud mass. Acting as artificial condensation nuclei, the Silver iodide promotes the formation of rain drops in addition to those forming by natural processes. Cloud seeding 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 1982. Due to its ideal setting for certain types of operations, Santa Barbara has been the focus of numerous cloud seeding 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, U.S. Weather Bureau, and the National Science Foundation.

Currently, Twitchell Reservoir is mostly 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 100,000 acre-feet of storage space available.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: Yes

Fiscal Analysis:

<u>Funding Sources</u>	<u>Current FY Cost:</u>	<u>Annualized On-going Cost:</u>	<u>Total One-Time Project Cost</u>
General Fund			
State			
Federal			
Water Agency Funds	\$ 155,037.50		
Local Water Districts	\$ 155,037.50		
Total	\$ 310,075.00	\$ -	\$ -

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 cloud seeding program.

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-178 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, one each of the Lease Agreements, and a copy of the minute order to the Water Agency office, Attn: Christina Lopez

Attachments:

Mitigated Negative Declaration 13NGD-00000-00011

CEQA Findings

Contract Summary

Agreement for Services of Independent Contractor w/NAWC (3 originals)

Dolcini Lease Renewal Agreement (2 originals)

Rincon Broadcasting LLC Lease Renewal Agreement (2 originals)

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