



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: May 8, 2018
Placement: Departmental
Estimated Time: 30 minutes
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: Santa Maria Groundwater Basin Fringe Basin Boundary Modification; Third, Fourth, and Fifth Supervisorial Districts

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Other Concurrence: N/A

Recommended Actions:

- a) Receive a presentation on Basin Boundary Modifications in the Santa Maria Groundwater Basin Fringe;
- b) Adopt the resolution entitled "Resolution to Submit a Basin Boundary Modification for the Santa Maria River Valley Groundwater Basin Fringe Areas within the County of Santa Barbara";
- c) Adopt the resolution entitled "Resolution Of Support For The Santa Maria River Valley Groundwater Basin Boundary Modification Request By The Santa Maria Basin Fringe Areas - County Of San Luis Obispo Groundwater Sustainability Agency"; and
- d) Determine that the proposed actions are not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act, pursuant to Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5), organization or administrative activities that will not result in a direct or indirect physical change in the environment.

Summary Text:

This item is on the agenda to request Board approval to submit a Basin Boundary Modification to the California Department of Resources (DWR) for the Santa Maria Groundwater Basin Fringe, and to

request Board support for a County of San Luis Obispo Basin Boundary Modification in a portion of the Santa Maria Groundwater Basin Fringe.

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) established a process for modifying the Bulletin 118 boundary of a basin. Based on reviews of the geology and water use in the fringe areas, a boundary modification to remove some of the fringe areas from the basin appears to be appropriate. On February 13, 2018, the Board completed the first step in the process by approving submittal of an initial notification to DWR that the Water Agency is considering Basin Boundary Modification for the fringe areas of the basin. Since the notification was submitted, Water Agency staff has prepared technical information supporting the modification, held a public meeting with stakeholders in the fringe areas, met with DWR staff to discuss the proposed modification, and coordinated with the County of San Luis Obispo.

Staff proposes to submit a Basin Boundary Modification request to DWR to eliminate fringe areas of the Santa Maria Groundwater Basin, as defined by DWR's Bulletin 118, that are outside of the boundaries of the adjudication. These fringe areas proposed for removal include narrow strips along the western and eastern edges of the adjudicated basin, and along short reaches of the Sisquoc River and Tepusquet Creek.

The fringe areas along the western and eastern edges of the basin are primarily underlain by consolidated bedrock rather than alluvial aquifer materials, and have no groundwater wells. Many of these areas contain parcels that are split by the basin boundary used for the adjudication. The portions of the parcels within the fringe areas, although outside of the adjudicated basin boundary, are still considered to be managed by the adjudication and could not be managed pursuant to SGMA even if they contained water bearing materials and had wells.

The area along the Sisquoc River is a narrow strip of alluvial material along the river bed. In addition, a concrete groundwater barrier was installed across the river in 1910, which impedes subsurface flow from the alluvial materials along the river to the main basin. Finally, the parcels along the western edge of the fringe are split by the adjudicated boundary and are considered to be managed pursuant to the adjudication. These are the only parcels with any wells or irrigated land.

The area along Tepusquet Creek is also a narrow strip of alluvial material. There is no irrigated land within this fringe area. Known groundwater wells are shallow (30'-60') support rural residential parcels and horse operations. Some crops are grown in this area, but they are dry farmed. The parcels along the southern portion of the fringe are split by the adjudicated boundary and are considered to be managed pursuant to the adjudication. Finally, along a bridge at the base of the canyon, the bedrock (Monterey Formation shale) outcrops at the surface immediately adjacent to both sides of the creek. It is likely that the bedrock is extremely shallow along the creek bottom at this point, forming a barrier that impedes subsurface flow to the main portion of the basin.

The fringe area along the Cuyama River Valley from Twitchell Reservoir to the adjudicated basin is split by the county boundary line. The County of San Luis Obispo has funded a study of the entire fringe area on both sides of the county line. After consultations between staff of both counties and DWR, it was determined that a single boundary modification request should be submitted for this fringe area, rather than one submitted by each county. The County of San Luis Obispo has agreed to take the lead on this submittal, and will be requesting that this area be removed from the Bulletin 118 basin boundary.

Background:

SGMA was signed into law by Governor Brown in 2014. SGMA provides a framework for the sustainable management of groundwater supplies by local agencies and provides tools, authority, and a timeline for local agencies during the 20-year implementation period. SGMA requires sustainable management of the County’s basins that are designated as medium- or high-priority by DWR. In Santa Barbara County these basins include the Cuyama Valley, San Antonio Creek Valley, Santa Ynez River Valley, Santa Maria River Valley, and Goleta Groundwater Basins.

Basins that have been previously adjudicated are not subject to SGMA, with the exception of specific reporting requirements. In the high priority Santa Maria Basin, the boundary of the adjudication does not completely match with the basin boundary as defined in DWR’s Bulletin 118, leaving “fringe” areas which are unmanaged. SGMA requires that all portions of a basin be managed, and a GSA was therefore required for these fringe areas.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: Yes

Fiscal Analysis:

Narrative:

The costs associated with SGMA implementation are included in the adopted FY 2017-18 budget in the Water Resources Division of the Public Works Department on page D-325 in the budget book. No General Fund monies will be utilized for this project.

Special Instructions:

Direct the Clerk of the Board to send copies of both resolutions along with the minute order to the Water Agency office, Attn: Christina Lopez.

Attachments:

- Attachment A – Santa Maria Groundwater Basin Proposed Boundary Map
- Attachment B – Resolution to Submit a Basin Boundary Modification for the Santa Maria River Valley Groundwater Basin Fringe in Santa Barbara County
- Attachment C – Resolution Of Support For The Santa Maria River Valley Groundwater Basin Boundary Modification Request By The Santa Maria Basin Fringe Areas - County Of San Luis Obispo Groundwater Sustainability Agency
- Attachment D – PowerPoint Presentation

Authored by:

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