



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: CEO
Department No.: 012
For Agenda Of: 9/9/14
Placement: Departmental
Estimated Time: 2 hours
Continued Item: Yes
If Yes, date from: 6/17/14
Vote Required: No Vote Required

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Department Director(s)
Contact Info: Ryan Rockabrand, OEM Director, 681-5532
Thomas Fayram, Deputy Public Works Director, 568-3436

SUBJECT: Cachuma Drought Update and Water Legislative Reports, All Supervisorial Districts

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

- A. Receive a report from the United States Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) regarding fish releases from Cachuma Dam;
- B. Receive a report from Governmental Advocates on State Legislative activity related to water issues; and
- C. Determine that the proposed action is not subject to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b) (5), as it is an administrative action that will not result in direct or indirect changes to the environment.

Summary Text:

On June 17, 2014, your Board received an update from the County Drought Task Force on drought related issues and the status of the various water purveyors in the County. At that meeting, your Board directed staff to return to the Board with information on a variety of issues. In this Board hearing, your Board will receive a report from Reclamation relating to releases of water from Cachuma for fisheries. Additionally, Governmental Advocates will report on the status of water related legislative activities. Staff will return to your Board on October 14, 2014 for a broader discussion and update on water supplies and drought conditions.

Reclamation constructed the Cachuma Project in the 1950's. While Reclamation owns and operates the functions at the Dam, other elements of the Project are delegated out to various agencies by agreement or contract. The Park is operated by the County Parks Division under a Managing Partner Agreement and the Water Supply Contract is entered into by the County Water Agency on behalf of the Cachuma

Member Units. The Project conveyance features from the North Portal through the Tecolote Tunnel and South Coast Conduit is operated by the Cachuma Operations and Maintenance Board (COMB) under an agreement with Reclamation.

Fish Releases

In 2000, Reclamation received a Biological Opinion (BO) from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for ongoing operation of the Cachuma Project. The 2000 BO specified certain actions to be taken including releases from the reservoir for protection of fish, namely, the Southern Steelhead which became listed under the Endangered Species Act in 1997. Reclamation will outline the criteria for making fish releases in their presentation to your Board. In addition, Reclamation has subsequently entered into a new consultation with NMFS that would result in a new BO. The new BO is expected sometime in 2015.

State Legislative Activity

Two issues in particular have been receiving significant attention from the State Legislature relating to Water Resources: 1) negotiations over a new water bond to be put on the statewide ballot; and 2) a pair of groundwater management bills AB 1739 (Dickinson) and SB 1168 (Pavley) to address concerns over groundwater use. Governmental Advocates will present the status of these issues in the Legislature.

Background:

The Cachuma Project was constructed by Reclamation in the 1950's and ultimately the lake filled and spilled in 1958. Water is delivered to five "Cachuma Member Units" under contract with Reclamation held by the County Water Agency. The five Cachuma Member Units are Santa Ynez River Water Conservation Improvement District #1, the Goleta Water District, the City of Santa Barbara, the Montecito Water District, and the Carpinteria Valley Water District.

Water released for fisheries is accomplished by a pump system to put water in Hilton Creek (a tributary just downstream of the Dam), and also down river by the Dam's release works. Both of these functions are controlled by Reclamation.

State legislative activities have been very active relating to the proposed Water Bond and Groundwater Management.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts: Budgeted: No

Narrative:

This hearing is to receive oral reports regarding the Cachuma Steelhead issue as well as receive an update on Water Legislative issues as requested by the Board at their hearing on June 17, 2014. This is an informational hearing only and there are no fiscal impacts to the County at this time.

Special Instructions:

Direct the Clerk of the Board to send a copy of the minute order of these actions to the Water Agency office, Attn: Christina Lopez.

Authored by:

Thomas Fayram, Deputy Public Works Director, 568-3436