



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: November 7, 2017
Placement: Departmental
Estimated Time: 45 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: Update on Cachuma Project Water Quality and Contract Renewal; First, Second Third, and Fourth Supervisorial Districts

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: No

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Directors:

- a) Receive an update on the Cachuma Project Contract Renewal Process;
- b) Receive a report on water quality issues resulting from the Whittier Fire; and
- c) Find that the recommended actions a and b, to receive an update and report are organizational or administrative activities that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes to the environment and therefore do not constitute a "Project" within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act, as set forth in 14 CCR 15378(b)(5).

Summary Text:

This item is on the agenda in order to return to your Board on two issues relating to the Cachuma Project:

1. An update on the Cachuma Contract Renewal Process; and
2. A report on water quality issues relating to the Cachuma Project as a result of the Whittier Fire.

Cachuma Contract Renewal

On May 2, 2017, your Board directed staff to initiate renewal of the Cachuma Water Service Contract on behalf of the Cachuma Member Units. Since then, staff has continued to hold monthly meetings with the Member Units and has had three (3) Technical Sessions with the United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR). The Member Units participated in two (2) of the Technical Sessions.

Through these meetings, staff believes the best path forward is to receive a draft water supply contract from USBR. Staff has requested a draft of the new water supply contract from the USBR but has yet to receive one. Both USBR and staff agree that executing a new contract prior to the expiration of the existing contract, which is set to expire on September 30, 2020, is essential. Based on the meetings to date, one of the most significant issues to work through is the yield/allocation plan for the reservoir. The CEO and Public Works staff will return to your Board with updates and to seek your Board's direction in the future as appropriate.

Whittier Fire / Water Quality Impacts

During the United States Forest Service (USFS) Burn Area Emergency Response (BAER) Report presentation at the August 29, 2017 Board hearing, staff was directed to return to the Board with a report on water quality impacts this winter in Cachuma Lake.

As was reported at the Board, the USFS funding request for hydromulching was denied. Recently the USFS was contacted to confirm this was the case and USFS reported that indeed funding for mulching was denied. USBR, however, is considering funding work on USBR property surrounding and including Cachuma Lake. This could include stabilization on USBR lands and protection of the Tecolote Tunnel North Portal. Funding approvals by USBR are being sought at this time.

Regardless of any of the above referenced mitigation, the proximity of the fire to Cachuma, and as experienced in past fires by the City of Santa Barbara at Gibraltar Reservoir, water quality impacts may cause difficulties for the two (2) South Coast water treatment plants (Corona del Mar and Cater) for periods this winter. The City of Santa Barbara experienced these issues in Gibraltar Reservoir last winter with impacts associated with the Rey Fire. Ultimately the water cleared up and deliveries from Gibraltar were resumed. Several factors lead into whether this issue will result with Cachuma this winter. While Gibraltar had water quality issues, Cachuma is a larger reservoir; even in its current state it has more water in storage than Gibraltar. Rainfall patterns will impact these issues as well.

To address these issues, the County Water Agency and County OEM convened a meeting of the South Coast water purveyors to discuss contingency plans for the winter if Cachuma water is not treatable for a period of time. In short, all South Coast water purveyors are planning to meet their demands by utilizing other water sources until Cachuma water is available. A summary of agency plans are as follows:

- Goleta Water District will revert back to its groundwater basin for this period of time.
- City of Santa Barbara will utilize a combination of water from Gibraltar Reservoir, desal, and groundwater.
- Montecito Water District will utilize Jamison Reservoir and groundwater, plus additional demand management if necessary.
- Carpinteria Valley Water District will revert to its groundwater basin similar to Goleta Water District.

The water purveyors were confident that they could meet their water demands this winter for the necessary period of time before Cachuma water becomes usable. Water demand in the winter is typically much lower.

Background:

This report is in response to the Board's request to receive an update on the status of the Cachuma Project Water Service Contract. The Board also requested that the Water Agency report on the plans the South Coast water purveyors have to meet their demands this winter due to the water quality impacts in Cachuma Lake caused by the Whittier Fire.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: No

Fiscal Analysis:

Narrative:

There are no fiscal impacts associated with these actions.

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.

Attachments:

Attachment A – PowerPoint

Authored by:

Thomas D. Fayram, Deputy Public Works Director, 568-3436