BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Agenda Number:	
Department Name:	PW/Water Agency
Department No.:	054
For Agenda Of:	October 3, 2023
Placement:	Departmental
Estimated Tme:	45 minutes
Continued Item:	No
If Yes, date from:	
Vote Required:	Majority

TO: Board of Directors, Water Agency

FROM: Department Director(s): Scott D. McGolpin, Public Works Director, (805) 568-3010
Contact Info: Matt Griffin, Interim Deputy Director – Water Resources , (805) 568-3444

SUBJECT: **Santa Barbara County Water Resources Update and 2023 Groundwater Basins Summary Report, All Supervisorial Districts**

County Counsel Concurrence
As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence
As to form: N/A

Other Concurrence: N/A

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Directors:

a) Receive and file an update on water resources throughout the County of Santa Barbara;

b) Receive and file the Santa Barbara County 2023 Groundwater Basins Summary Report; and

c) Determine that these actions are 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, and 15306 as information collection which does not result in serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource.

Summary Text:

This item is on the agenda to receive and file a presentation on water resources in Santa Barbara County. Staff will update your Board on the status of water resources in the County, and provide an overview of projects and programs intended to ensure water supply reliability.

This item is also on the agenda to receive and file the Santa Barbara County 2023 Groundwater Basins Summary Report (Attachment A). On March 19, 2019, the Board directed the Water Agency to return annually with a report which illustrates groundwater conditions, summarizes the various monitoring programs, and outlines the resources available for locating groundwater data throughout the County. Although parts of some basins are located outside the County boundary, only data located within the

County are referenced. Sub-basins within the larger groundwater basins are also differentiated as determined by management area or natural barriers to groundwater movement. Hydrographs of water surface elevation for representative monitoring wells located within each of these basins are plotted with yearly precipitation totals within the basin to clearly illustrate long-term storage trends, seasonal recharge response, and discharge. Discrete water level values illustrated in these hydrographs are representative of yearly maximum aquifer levels during early spring and before significant agricultural pumping resumes.

Background:

The groundwater basins of Santa Barbara County are essential sources of water for both municipal and agricultural uses and provide a critical line of defense against periodic water shortages. Unlike the surface water storage network, groundwater resources may not react as quickly following precipitation events. Recharge is complex and can vary between and within each groundwater basin as a result of aquifer materials, local geology, physical barriers, hydrology, evapotranspiration, and anthropogenic activity. Water levels may rise quickly in shallow wells when located in alluvium along flowing rivers and creeks. Deeper wells however, may not show signs of recharge for many years following wet seasons.

Water level elevation data from groundwater monitoring networks have been collected throughout Santa Barbara County for decades. These networks provide representative data of the major aquifer systems and attempt to emphasize the role of local variables such as geology, topography and land use on recharge, sub-surface flow, and distribution. Data also illustrate temporal variability and are combined with meteorological data to assist in the interpretation of ambient water level changes. The temporal and spatial distribution of the monitoring network has continued to change throughout the years and may be dependent on many factors to include funding, local groundwater study objectives, legislative requirements, and landowner access. Some networks have been developed to track long-term trends, while others are more specific to modeling goals or local water distribution objectives.

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) was passed in 2014 to create a framework for groundwater sustainability throughout California. As part of SGMA, Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA) are responsible for the development, implementation, and oversight of Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSP) within groundwater basins. As GSPs are implemented within the basins of Santa Barbara County, water level monitoring becomes the responsibility of each respective GSA.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: Yes

Fiscal Analysis:

Staff time for this work is included in the annual budget for the Water Resources Division of the Public Works Department.

Special Instructions:

Direct the Clerk of the Board to email a minute order of these actions to Christina Lopez at clopez@countyofsb.org

Attachments:

Attachment A: Santa Barbara County 2023 Groundwater Basins Summary Report

Authored by:

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