



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: 06/17/14
Placement: Departmental
Estimated Tme: 1 hour
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: No Vote Required

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Department Ryan Rockabrand, Director of Emergency Management, 681-5532
Director(s) Scott D. McGolpin, Public Works Director, 568-3010
Cathy Fisher, Director, Agricultural Commissioner's Office, 681-5600
Contact Info: Terri Maus-Nisich, Assistant County Executive Officer, 568-3400
Thomas D. Fayram, Deputy Public Works Director, 568-3436

SUBJECT: Water Supply and Drought Update, All Supervisorial District

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

- a) Receive a water supply and drought status report from the County's Drought Task Force;
- b) Receive information regarding water supply and drought measures from individual local water purveyors; 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:

Although the County is not a purveyor of water, it has an extensive role in managing water supplies, providing information and studies regarding water resources, and leading regional water conservation efforts. In response to the worsening drought, the County Executive Officer formed a Drought Task Force for the purpose of efficiently communicating and addressing drought related conditions. In addition to the appropriate County Departments, the Task Force includes the Central Coast Water Authority (CCWA) Executive Director and the Cachuma Operations and Maintenance Board (COMB) General Manager.

As requested by the Chair, this informational item includes reports on the current water supply conditions and drought response by the County and water purveyors. CCWA and COMB will also provide information on the status of their projects. Additionally, the Chair sent a letter to each purveyor in the County to provide details on their expected demand and expected supplies. A summary of the Purveyor responses is in Attachment A.

Background:

Santa Barbara County's climate is subject to both wet and dry extremes. Rainfall records since the late 1800s show exceptionally dry periods lasting seven years or more. Prior to the current drought, the most recent of these occurred from 1986 to 1991, a period during which many of the County's primary water supplies were nearly exhausted.

The County is now in its third consecutive dry year with rainfall totals only about 40% of normal for the current year. This follows on the heels of two very dry years prior. Many local water supplies are very low and imported water is greatly reduced due to the impacts of the drought which is occurring statewide. On January 17, 2014, the Governor of California proclaimed a State of Emergency and the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors declared a drought emergency on January 21, 2014. Subsequently, the Governor signed a second emergency proclamation on April 25, 2014 to reinforce the importance of the ongoing drought conditions.

The 2013/14 Winter resulted in enough precipitation to restore a 5% delivery of the State Water Project (previously 0% delivery). While storms in March and April improved conditions slightly in Northern California, local conditions did not improve. As such, Cachuma received no appreciable inflow this past winter. Upstream of Cachuma, Gibraltar and Jamison Reservoirs received some minimal inflow but insufficient to change the supply status.

CCWA has been actively seeking to purchase water and has been somewhat successful. CCWA will be available to report on purchases and expected delivery schedules at the hearing. Concurrently, COMB has been diligently preparing for an Emergency Pump Project (EPS) and has secured a contractor to do the work. COMB has targeted September 19, 2014 as the goal for having the EPS operational. Updates on the schedule of the EPS will be reported at the hearing as well.

Although water conservation is an ongoing focus in Santa Barbara County, there has been significant effort at both the County and water purveyor levels to address the worsening water shortages and prepare for an extended drought. In addition to proclamations encouraging or requiring increased conservation, water providers are pursuing emergency water supply projects and additional water supply sources.

In terms of the County's agricultural economy, the livestock industry has been significantly impacted due to the drought. The recent Forage Production report from U.C. Extension indicates forage production in the county is currently experiencing a 95% loss from normal production. Some sites had 100% loss of normal production. Indications are that approximately 75% or more of all cattle in the county have either been sold or moved to wherever forage could be found particularly the mountains and adjoining states. This year's drought impacts are the compounded result of three years of below average precipitation and forage production. Many ranches will fall well below recommended guidelines for

“residual dry matter” (RDM), which means there will be an increased risk for erosion if we get heavy rain storms early in the fall. It may take several seasons of conservative stocking to return rangeland pastures to more typical productivity again, assuming that Central Coast precipitation recovers to its expected seasonal pattern by this fall.

As directed by the Chair of the Board, the Public Works Department and Office of Emergency Management prepared this report on drought status and actions by County staff and the water purveyors. Additional information relating to the County’s efforts relating to water usage will be presented including:

- Agricultural Water Issues
- Internal County Water Use Issues
- Establishment of a Regional Communication Educational Outreach Effort

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: No

Fiscal Analysis:

Narrative:

This hearing is to receive reports from the County’s Drought Task Force and the local water purveyors regarding water supply and drought measures being implemented by each agency. This is an informational hearing only no action is required by the Board at this time.

Special Instructions:

Direct the Clerk of the Board to send a copy of the minute order of these actions to the Flood Control District, Attn: Christina Lopez.

Attachments:

Purveyor Water Status Summary Table
Water Supply Condition Reports from Individual Purveyors

Authored by:

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