

**SANTA BARBARA COUNTY
BOARD AGENDA LETTER**



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
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TO: Board of Directors
Santa Barbara County Water Agency

Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Barbara

FROM: Phillip M. Demery, Director, Ext. 3010
Public Works Department

**STAFF
CONTACT:** Thomas Fayram, Deputy Public Works Director, Ext. 3436
Water Resources Division

SUBJECT: **Santa Barbara County 2005 Groundwater Report
All Supervisorial Districts**

Recommendation(s):

That the Board of Directors/Supervisors:

- A. Receive and file the *Santa Barbara County 2005 Groundwater Report* and authorize distribution of the report for County and public information; and
- B. Authorize the Public Works Department, Water Resources Division, to prepare and bring the Groundwater Report to your Board on a tri-annual basis, or more frequently if determined necessary by the Public Works Director.

Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:

The recommendation is primarily aligned with Goal No. 5: Maintain and Enhance the Quality of Life for all Residents.

Executive Summary and Discussion:

The Santa Barbara County Groundwater Report updates information on groundwater conditions and includes recent water quality trends and water level measurements. The report satisfies one requirement of the *Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan Conservation Element, Groundwater Resources Section*, which was adopted May 24, 1994, and amended November 8, 1994. *Conservation Element Goal 4, Policy 4.1, Action 4.1.1* states that:

The County Water Agency shall continue to monitor water levels from existing monitoring wells and, in coordination with the U.C. Cooperative Extension/Farm Advisor, shall request, on a voluntary

basis, private and public water purveyors and major private groundwater users, including agricultural users, to provide periodic records of groundwater production. Unless deemed unnecessary by the Water Agency's Board of Directors for any year, the Agency shall compile an annual report on the status of pumping amounts, water levels, overdraft conditions, and other relevant data, and shall submit this report to the Board of Supervisors for its acceptance and possible further action.

This report focuses on measurements and conditions during the 2005 calendar year.

Groundwater conditions are best analyzed over a period of many years or climatic cycles due to the time it takes rainfall and surface water runoff to percolate into groundwater basins and the nature of groundwater systems' response to multi year wet and dry periods. During the 9 years since the initial report, it has become apparent that the changes reported in the annual reporting cycle are incremental. Due to changes in priorities and staffing, Water Agency staff available to work on groundwater monitoring and reporting has decreased. As a result of these two factors, Water Agency staff recommends that an annual report is unnecessary and thus requests your Boards approval to change the reporting period on the groundwater report to every three years, the next report to be in the 2008 water year.

It is important to note that annual measurements will continue, thus the groundwater level data will still be collected and available to the public.

Mandates and Service Levels:

The Groundwater Section of the Conservation Element of the County's General Plan directs preparation of this report. Data will still be collected evaluated annually and will continue to be made available through requests of staff and the USGS website, thus a tri-annual report will not reduce public access to groundwater information. In addition, if any unforeseen conditions manifest themselves, staff would report to your Board prior to the next scheduled report.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Preparation of this report is part of the ongoing Water Agency work program. Costs associated with preparing the 2005 report were included in the Adopted 2005/06 Budget and were allocated in the Water Agency Center under the Water Resources Division of the Public Works Department as shown on page D-326 in the budget book. Costs were paid from Dept: 054, Acct: 6000/7891, Fund: 3050, Program: 3012. Changing to a tri-annual report is estimated to allow the Water Agency to redirect approximately 200 hours of staff time to other tasks in two years out of every three.

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