

Attachment No. 1

Environmental Health Services Well Activity Report

Environmental Health Services (EHS) continues to experience a significant increase in well permit applications received relative to previous years. During fiscal years 2010/11 through 2012/13, EHS received an average 57 well permit applications per year. In 2013/14 EHS received 165 applications. Twenty eight (28) applications have been submitted thus far in the current fiscal year.

The majority of these well applications are for irrigation wells in North County. However, there has also been a jump in permit applications to construct wells in the Montecito/Carpinteria areas. On average, EHS receives 9 well permit applications per year for this area. In contrast, 80 permit applications were received in FY 2013/14. The Montecito Water District has instituted mandatory water restrictions. Consequently, while the District has reported a significant drop in water usage by its customers a number of property owners are drilling wells to irrigate landscaping negating some water conservation gains.

The increased demand has resulted in a large backlog of work for well contractors. Information from various sources in the industry indicates long wait times (in excess of a year) to begin construction of new wells. While the drought has undoubtedly reduced the productivity of some wells resulting in increased well activity, there is some legitimacy to the thought that some are submitting applications early just to reserve a place in the line.

To try to keep up with the demand for their services, well contractors are operating their drilling rigs seven days per week. As a consequence, EHS has responded to a number of complaints about drilling equipment parked on residential streets and the noise generated by the rigs. EHS has discussed the complaints with the contractors in order to reduce the impact their activity has on a neighborhood, however as long as the work is being performed in accordance with the county code, there is little that can be done.