



Agenda Item No. _____

File Code No.

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

ITEM 8

AGENDA DATE: May 5, 2015

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Water Resources Division, Public Works Department

SUBJECT: Introduction Of Ordinance Amending Municipal Code Chapter 14.32
To Prohibit Private Water Well Construction On Properties Served By
The City's Water System

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council introduce and subsequently adopt, by reading of title only, An Ordinance of the Council of the City of Santa Barbara Amending Municipal Code Chapter 14.32 to Prohibit Private Water Well Construction on Properties Served by the City's Water System.

DISCUSSION:

After four years of historically dry weather and diminished surface water supply, the City is preparing to declare a Stage Three Drought Condition in May 2015. Stage Three is the highest level of drought response. Given this serious drought condition, it is critical to protect the City's groundwater basins. Groundwater is an important part of the City's water supply, particularly during critical drought periods, when normal surface water supplies are limited. Groundwater is also the City's only current potable water supply that is available in the event deliveries from the Santa Ynez River are disrupted.

The City boundaries overlie Storage Units I and III of the Santa Barbara groundwater basin, as well as portions of the Foothill Basin, which are all relatively small basins. The City currently owns and operates water supply production wells in both of the primary groundwater basins and has an extensive network of groundwater monitoring wells that measure water levels and water quality. While the City is the only known pumper in Storage Unit I, there are other private pumpers in Storage Unit III and the Foothill Basin, over which the City has only limited control.

Santa Barbara Municipal Code (SBMC) Chapter 14.32 is known as the Well Ordinance of the City of Santa Barbara. The Ordinance specifies regulations related to the metering and permitting of water wells. Section 14.32.040 requires that a valid permit be obtained from the Public Works Director before any person may construct, modify, repair, abandon, or destroy any water well.

Staff recommends that Council introduce and subsequently adopt, by reading of title only, an Ordinance Amending Municipal Code Chapter 14.32 To Prohibit Private Water Well Construction On Properties Served By The City's Water System.

The amended Ordinance will prohibit the construction or replacement of water supply production wells when a property is or can feasibly be served by the City's water supply system. This prohibition will help ensure that water users adhere to the City's water conservation rules, will prevent the wasteful misuse of groundwater, and will protect the financial integrity of the City's water supply system by preventing parallel usage of groundwater and City water system supplies. The amended Ordinance will help manage the City's groundwater basins and ensure adequate water supply for public health, safety, and welfare of the community.

PREPARED BY: Joshua Haggmark, Water Resources Manager /CT/DH/mh

SUBMITTED BY: Rebecca J. Bjork, Public Works Director

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office