



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

ITEM 7

AGENDA DATE: February 3, 2015

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Water Resources Division, Public Works Department

SUBJECT: Stage Two Drought Update

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council receive an update on the status of the current drought and related efforts.

DISCUSSION:

On February 11, 2014, Council declared a Stage One Drought and asked customers to reduce water use by 20 percent. Council requested that staff keep them informed and report back monthly with a status update on the City's water supplies, conservation efforts, and current work efforts. On May 20, 2014, Council declared a Stage Two Drought in response to a continued water shortage forecasted for next year, and the inability of the community to reduce water usage by 20 percent. This report will cover the following items:

- Water Supply Outlook/Weather Forecast
- Drought Response Capital Projects
- Conservation Efforts

Water Supply Outlook

Despite moderate rainfall in November and early December, our water supply outlook remains unchanged. We need prolonged wet weather to make a significant impact on our current water supplies. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA) is projecting above-average rainfall through March. Unfortunatley, January has remained dry, and any significant rainfall is not projected until mid-February. Due to the uncertainty in projected rainfall, staff is planning for continued drought conditions. Staff continues to work on securing additional supplemental water, accelerating drought related capital projects, and sustaining a strong message for extraordinary conservation. The most recent water conservation numbers for December 2014 show a 33.5 percent reduction in water use as compared to average water use in December.

This positive news means that the community continues to be responsive to the request for conservation, and that we remain on target with our goal of a 20 percent reduction in water use.

Drought Response Capital Projects

Staff is moving forward with the design and construction of capital projects to assist with the water supply during the drought. This includes the acceleration of groundwater well replacement and projects that use poor-quality groundwater in place of potable water for irrigation. Groundwater wells include the Corporation Yard Well, which is currently online and whose water is being treated at the Ortega Groundwater Treatment Plant; Valle Verde Well, whose water is being pumped into the City's recycled water system; and the new Alameda Well that was recently awarded a contract for construction.

As reported at the December 16, 2014 Council meeting, the Request For Proposals to design, build, and operate the desalination facility was sent out to three pre-qualified firms on November 17, 2014. Proposals are now due on March 5, 2015. At the request of all three firms, an additional month was granted to ensure adequate time to put together a comprehensive response.

Staff submitted an application for a State Revolving Fund (SRF) loan in December and made a trip to Sacramento in January to discuss the critical timeline for the project and review the application. Based on our conversations with SRF staff, it appears that the earliest we would see final loan documents would be in May 2015, which would support a contract award for the reactivation of the desalination facility in June 2015. Based on our review of the schedule, we believe this timeline will still provide sufficient time to bring the plant online, should drought conditions continue.

Conservation Efforts

Staff has increased the Water Conservation Outreach Program through an enhanced drought media campaign: additional targeted outreach, including increased weekly messaging through social media, online news outlets and industry contacts; presentations to community and industry groups; additional printed materials with drought messaging; targeted utility bill messaging; drought signage at City facilities; and additional trainings and workshops.

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APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office