

**STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD  
BOARD MEETING SESSION – DIVISION OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE  
JANUARY 6, 2009**

**ITEM 3**

**SUBJECT**

CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION ADOPTING A STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE SANTA BARBARA COUNTYWIDE INTEGRATED REGIONAL WATER MANAGEMENT (IRWM) IMPLEMENTATION GRANT, CITY OF SANTA MARIA (CITY) WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT (WWTP) PHASE 2 (COMPONENT 7)

**DISCUSSION**

In November 2002, California voters approved the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Act of 2002, (Stats. 2003, ch. 493). It amended the Water Code to add, among other articles, § 79560 et seq., authorizing the Legislature to appropriate funding for IRWM projects. The intent of the IRWM Grant Program is to fund projects that protect communities from drought, protect and improve water quality, and improve local water security by reducing dependence on imported water while encouraging water management on a regional level.

Proposition 50 allocates approximately \$360 million to implement these projects. The IRWM Grant Program is administered jointly by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) and the Department of Water Resources (DWR). The IRWM Program Guidelines for Round 2 were adopted by the State Water Board and approved by DWR in July 2007. On June 3, 2008, the State Water Board adopted an IRWM Implementation Grant Funding list with grants totaling \$31.1 million ([Resolution No. 2008-0039](#)).

Component 7 is part of the larger Santa Barbara Countywide IRWM Implementation Project awarded funds by the State Water Board as part of the IRWM Grant Program. Component 7 includes the construction of new facilities to increase the WWTP capacity from 9.5 million gallons per day (MGD) to 13.5 MGD. In addition, Component 7 upgrades existing facilities to maintain service levels, sustain projected growth, and meet sewage treatment capabilities consistent with Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Central Coast Water Board) requirements. Currently, the City's main source of water is a blend of groundwater and water obtained from the State Water Project. Component 7 will provide effluent, treated to a tertiary level, further filtered through percolation ponds to the groundwater basin at a 65 percent reliability factor. The reliability factor is the percentage of water that filters to the groundwater basin. This system will improve overall groundwater quality and will reduce demand on the State Water Project.

Component 7 consists of: 1) new percolation ponds; 2) new structures - primary clarifier, primary trickling filter, digester, digester control building, percolation pond pump station, emergency generator, and asphalt sludge drying beds; 3) modifications to existing structures - headworks, grit chamber, primary trickling filter pump station, secondary trickling filter, digester control building, and primary clarifier no. 1 bridge replacement; 4) new field piping and electrical duct bank construction; and, 5) electrical, instrumentation, mechanical, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning construction, and supervisory control and data acquisition improvements.

The State Water Board has not previously made findings regarding Component 7 pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (Pub. Resources Code § 21000 et seq.).

The City prepared a draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that addresses a larger project that encompasses Component 7. The draft EIR was distributed to the public and circulated through the State Clearinghouse (No. 2005121171) for public review from April 3, 2006, through May 17, 2006. The City received comment letters from state agencies and others. The following are the comments relative to Component 7:

1. The Central Coast Water Board required that wells be constructed to monitor area groundwater quality.
2. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) requested coordination between the City and the City's airport, located approximately 14,000 feet southeast of the Component 7 site, for land use practices that may attract or sustain wildlife populations hazardous to air traffic. In addition, Caltrans requested completion of a traffic impact study that covers the overall Project.
3. The Public Utilities Commission identified safety factors to consider when planning the overall Project including, but not limited to: planning for grade separations for major thoroughfares, improvements to existing at-grade highway rail crossings due to increases in traffic volume, and appropriate fencing to limit access of trespassers onto the railroad right-of-way.
4. DWR requested more detailed Project documents to be forwarded when available, since Component 7 will be constructed in proximity to a DWR owned facility (the Coastal Pipeline).
5. The Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District identified updates to the California State Ambient Air Quality Standards that may be pertinent to construction and operation of the overall Project.

The City responded to all comments, provided clarifications, revised the draft EIR, as appropriate, and incorporated the responses in the final EIR. The City approved the larger Project, including Component 7, certified the final EIR, and adopted a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program and a Statement of Overriding Considerations (SOC) on September 19, 2006. The City filed a Notice of Determination with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research on September 25, 2006, and the City Clerk on September 27, 2006.

State Water Board staff reviewed and considered the EIR and applicable environmental documents, and determined that Component 7 will have no significant adverse water quality impacts.

The City adopted an SOC to substantiate its decision to approve Component 7 despite the following significant and unavoidable impacts:

- a. Cumulative impacts to aesthetics by altering the visual character of the site and introducing industrial elements to predominantly agricultural land.
- b. Permanent impacts to farmland due to the loss of a total of 40 acres of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Williamson Act Land for construction of percolation ponds.
- c. Cumulative impacts to farmland in that Component 7 would incrementally contribute to the gradual conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural use.

State Water Board staff finds that the following specific economic, social, technological, and environmental benefits of Component 7 outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental impacts:

- a. The City's primary source of water is groundwater. Water from the State Water Project is blended with groundwater to make groundwater acceptable for use. Component 7 includes construction of percolation ponds for disposal of treated wastewater. Effluent treated at a tertiary level will be filtered through the proposed percolation ponds into the groundwater basin to supplement existing groundwater levels. Component 7 will improve groundwater quality and increase groundwater levels in the basin, thus reducing demand on the State Water Project and positively augmenting the State's water supply.
- b. Component 7 will provide efficient and cost-effective wastewater treatment consistent with Central Coast Water Board requirements.
- c. The land acquired for Component 7 lies between two non-contiguous parcels of City property, and will connect them. This will allow for the expansion of the WWTP, as well as the inclusion of the Police Impound Yard, Humane Society Animal Shelter, and City Corporation Yard at the same locale to improve a variety of community services.

## **POLICY ISSUES**

Should the State Water Board:

Adopt an SOC regarding the Santa Barbara Countywide IRWM Implementation Grant for Component 7?

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

None

## **REGIONAL WATER BOARD IMPACT**

The Central Coast Regional Water Board issued Waste Discharge Requirements Order No. R3-2002-0111, which regulates the City's WWTP discharge. The City's prime source of water is groundwater. Currently, water from the State Water Project is blended with groundwater to make groundwater acceptable for use. Component 7 includes construction of percolation ponds for the disposal of tertiary treated wastewater. Treated effluent from the WWTP will be discharged into the percolation ponds where the effluent will be allowed to filter into the groundwater basin. Component 7 will improve groundwater quality and increase groundwater levels in the basin, thus reducing demand on the State Water Project.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

The State Water Board should:

Adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations regarding the Santa Barbara Countywide IRWM Implementation Grant for Component 7.

State Water Board action on this item will assist the Water Boards in reaching Goal 2 of the *Strategic Plan Update: 2008-2012* to improve and protect groundwater quality in high-use basins by 2030. In particular, approval of this item will assist in fulfilling Action 2.1.2 to encourage local entities to initiate the development of regional strategies to protect high-use groundwater basins and to work with the Department of Water Resources to direct funding for the development of Integrated Regional Water Management Plans to assist in these efforts.

# DRAFT

## STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD RESOLUTION NO. 2009-

ADOPTING A STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE SANTA BARBARA COUNTYWIDE INTEGRATED REGIONAL WATER MANAGEMENT (IRWM) IMPLEMENTATION GRANT, CITY OF SANTA MARIA (CITY) WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT (WWTP) PHASE 2 PROJECT (COMPONENT 7)

### WHEREAS:

1. The Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Act of 2002 authorizes approximately \$360 million to implement projects that protect communities from drought, protect and improve water quality, and improve local water security by reducing dependence on imported water while encouraging water management on a regional level;
2. The IRWM Grant Program is administered jointly by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) and the Department of Water Resources (DWR);
3. The IRWM Program Guidelines for Round 2 were adopted by the State Water Board and approved by DWR in July 2007;
4. On June 3, 2008, the State Water Board adopted an IRWM Implementation Grant Funding list with grants totaling \$31.1 million ([Resolution No. 2008-0039](#));
5. The Santa Barbara Countywide IRWM Implementation Project was on the June 3, 2008, IRWM Implementation Grant Funding List approved by the State Water Board;
6. Component 7 is part of the Santa Barbara Countywide IRWM Project;
7. The City prepared a final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that addresses Component 7 (State Clearinghouse No. 2005121171);
8. The City certified the final EIR, adopted the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program and a Statement of Overriding Considerations (SOC), and approved Component 7 on September 19, 2006;
9. The City filed a Notice of Determination with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research on September 25, 2006, and the City Clerk on September 27, 2006;
10. The State Water Board has not made findings regarding Component 7 of the Santa Barbara Countywide IRWM Implementation Project pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.);

# DRAFT

11. The City adopted an SOC to substantiate its decision to approve Component 7 despite the following significant unavoidable impacts:
  - a. Cumulative impacts to aesthetics by changing the visual character of the site and industrial elements.
  - b. Permanent impacts to farmland due to the loss of a total of 40 acres of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, and Williamson Act Land for construction of percolation ponds.
  - c. Cumulative impacts to farmland because Component 7 will incrementally contribute to the gradual conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural use.
12. The State Water Board finds that the following specific economic, social, technological, and environmental benefits of the Component 7 outweigh these unavoidable adverse environmental impacts:
  - a. The City's primary source of water is groundwater. Water from the State Water Project is blended with groundwater to make groundwater acceptable for use. Component 7 includes construction of percolation ponds for disposal of treated wastewater. Effluent treated at a tertiary level will be filtered through the proposed percolation ponds into the groundwater basin to supplement existing groundwater levels. Component 7 will improve groundwater quality and increase groundwater levels in the basin, thus reducing demand on the State Water Project and positively augmenting the State's water supply.
  - b. Component 7 will provide efficient and cost-effective wastewater treatment consistent with Central Coast Regional Water Board requirements.
  - c. The land acquired for Component 7 lies between two non-contiguous parcels of City property, and will connect them. This will allow for the expansion of the WWTP onto that connecting property, as well future inclusion of the Police Impound Yard, Humane Society Animal Shelter, and City Corporation Yard at the same locale to improve a variety of community services.
13. State Water Board reviewed and considered the EIR and applicable environmental documents, and determined that Component 7 will not result in any adverse impacts to water quality.

# **D R A F T**

## **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

The State Water Board:

Adopts a Statement of Overriding Considerations regarding the Santa Barbara Countywide IRWM Implementation Grant for Component 7.

## **CERTIFICATION**

The undersigned, Clerk to the Board, does hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true, and correct copy of a resolution duly and regularly adopted at a meeting of the State Water Board held on January 6, 2009.

---

Jeanine Townsend  
Clerk to the Board