



# CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

## COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

**AGENDA DATE:** September 9, 2014

**TO:** Mayor and Councilmembers

**FROM:** Water Resources Division, Public Works Department

**SUBJECT:** Approve Severn Trent Services As The Filter Media Vendor For The Ortega Groundwater Treatment Plant

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Council:

- A. Find it to be in the City's best interest to waive the formal bidding process as authorized by Municipal Code Section 4.52.070 (L), and approve Severn Trent Services as the filter media vendor for the Ortega Groundwater Treatment Plant; and
- B. Authorize the General Services Manager to award purchase order contracts to Severn Trent Services for iron media in an amount not to exceed \$1,000,000 for Fiscal Year 2015, and within approved budgets for the next four years, ending September 2018.

### DISCUSSION:

The City's Ortega Groundwater Treatment Plant (OGTP) treats groundwater produced from the City's downtown wells. The treated groundwater is then put into the water distribution system to supplement the surface water supplies. The OGTP is an important water facility, especially during times of drought when surface water supplies are dwindling.

The OGTP has two iron media vessels which serve to remove hydrogen sulfide from the groundwater. Hydrogen sulfide can produce off-smelling drinking water, e.g., sulfur or rotten eggs. During the design of the OGTP, extensive bench-scale and pilot-scale studies were performed to determine how to best treat the City's groundwater. In those studies, staff evaluated iron media from two suppliers, Severn Trent Services and Siemens. The type of iron media that can meet the sulfide removal requirements is unique to these two suppliers. Through these studies, the iron media provided by Severn Trent Services proved to be the best performing media with regard to hydrogen sulfide removal and cost. Staff continues to look for alternative media from other suppliers that can perform equally well.

Based on the exhaustive bench and pilot-scale studies, and in the absence of a viable alternative media, staff recommends that Council find it to be in the City's best interest to waive the formal bidding process, as authorized by Municipal Code Section 4.52.070 (L), and approve Severn Trent Services as the iron media and support gravel vendor for the OGTP, and authorize the City General Services Manager to issue purchase order contracts to Severn Trent Services for iron media and support gravel for the OGTP, in accordance with Council-approved budgets.

Through the water treatment process at the OGTP, iron media is gradually exhausted and eventually becomes ineffective at removing hydrogen sulfide, at which time it must be replaced. The frequency of iron media replacement depends on the volume of groundwater treated and the level of hydrogen sulfide present in the groundwater. If the drought persists, it is anticipated that the groundwater wells will be pumped at greater than normal rates to supplement surface water supplies. Greater volumes of treated groundwater will require the iron media to be replaced more frequently.

**BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:**

Water treatment chemical costs were anticipated to be \$1.7 million for Fiscal Year 2015. This is based on treating an estimate of one million gallons per day at the OGTP. However, if the drought persists, the groundwater wells will need to be pumped more often than anticipated. There are sufficient funds in the Water Fund to cover these costs.

**PREPARED BY:** Catherine Taylor, P.E., Water System Manager/CT/mh

**SUBMITTED BY:** Rebecca J. Bjork, Public Works Director

**APPROVED BY:** City Administrator's Office