



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: March 10, 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 some promising rainfall in the first part of this water year, 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 equal chances of above and below average rainfall throughout the remainder of the rainy season. We have seen below average rainfall in January and February, and to further compound the matter, we have seen above average temperatures, which has significantly diminished the benefits of the small amount of rain we have received. 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 January 2014 show a 24 percent reduction in water use as compared to average water use in January. 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 work projects to assist with the water supply during the drought. Highlights include beginning construction of a new Alameda Well, and operation of all three downtown wells, Corporation Yard, Vera Cruz, and City Hall.

On March 5, 2015, proposals were received for the reactivation of the Desalination Plant. Staff is reviewing the proposals now in preparation for interviews in late March. Negotiation with the top firm is anticipated to start during the first part of April. Award of a contract is tentatively scheduled for June 2015, when we are anticipating confirmation of loan funding. The current schedule would have the desalination plant operational in Fall 2016.

Efforts to secure supplemental water for next year are going well. We are anticipating having 4,500 acre-feet of additional water under contract by May 2015.

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