



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: September 15, 2015

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Water Resources Division, Public Works Department

SUBJECT: Request From Montecito Water District For Regional Use Of The Charles E. Meyer Desalination Plant

RECOMMENDATION: That Council:

- A. Direct Staff to send a letter to Montecito Water District to initiate formal discussions regarding the use of the City's Charles E. Meyer Desalination Plant as a Regional Water Supply; and
- B. Appoint an Ad Hoc Council Committee to consult with staff as issues arise.

BACKGROUND:

The Charles E. Meyer Desalination Plant (Desal Plant) was constructed by the City of Santa Barbara (City) as an emergency facility to supply water to the City, Goleta Water District (GWD) and Montecito Water District (MWD) during the last serious drought (1987-1991). The Desal Plant was constructed with maximum capacity of 10,000 AFY; however, only 7,500 AFY of reverse osmosis filtration capacity was constructed. The Desal Plant operated from March through June 1992, and delivered approximately 419 AF of desalinated water. Abundant rainfall in March of 1992 ended the drought, and the Desal Plant was placed into standby mode. At that time, GWD and MWD indicated that they did not wish to continue to participate in the Desal Plant.

The current drought is the worst in recorded history, which has made it necessary for the City to reactivate the Desal Plant. The severity of the drought is such that the need for the Desal water supply has been accelerated from that planned in the Long Term Water Supply Plan. Consequently, staff have been working to ensure all permits are secured and valid to supply City water customers with desal water by Fall 2016. At this time, the construction effort to return the Desal Plant to operating status is underway.

On June 16, 2015, MWD sent a letter to the City Administrator asking to have the Desal Plant operated to supply water regionally. The City was amenable to the idea and requested MWD to approach the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) and the California Coastal Commission for confirmation that the City's permits would allow for the regional use of water from the Desal Plant. Both permitting

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agencies have given verbal confirmation that the Desal Plant can be operated as a regional water supply. RWQCB has indicated discomfort replying to a letter from MWD pertaining to the City's permit and requested that the City submit a letter requesting to use the Desal Plant as a regional water supply, to which they will respond affirmatively in writing to the City. Staff has sent the letter request to RWQCB and is waiting for the response letter.

With confirmation from the regulatory agencies that the Desal Plant can be used as a regional water supply, staff is recommending that the City initiate formal discussions with MWD regarding using the Desal Plant as a regional water facility, and that an Ad-Hoc subcommittee is appointed to consult with staff as issues arise.

PREPARED BY: Rebecca J. Bjork, Public Works Director

SUBMITTED BY: Rebecca J. Bjork, Public Works Director

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office



Use Of The Desalination Plant For Regional Supply



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Background

- ◆ Desalination part of City's Long Term Water Supply Plan
- ◆ Permits contemplate 4 modes of operation
- ◆ City initiated reactivation to address immediate drought needs
- ◆ Montecito Water District has made a request for use as Regional Supply



Permitting Agency Responses

- ◆ Coastal Commission
 - Permit contemplates regional use
 - Valid as long is within proposed scenarios in permit
 - CCC will review for consistency based on specific proposal
- ◆ Regional Water Quality Control Board
 - Has verbally responded that initial review does not indicate a problem



Types of Issues

- ◆ Quantity of Water
- ◆ Timing of Needs
- ◆ Initiation of Proposal
- ◆ Intersection of Montecito Interests & City Interests
- ◆ Form of transaction
- ◆ Pricing and other terms



Recommendation

- ◆ Direct staff to send a letter to Montecito Water District to initiate formal discussions
- ◆ Appoint an ad-hoc committee to consult with staff as issues arise

Template Color Palette

- ◆ Sample chart color palette

