



PRESS RELEASE

Date: May 10, 2013

Contact: Melanie Mow Schumacher

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City of Santa Cruz and Soquel Creek Water District Announce Release of the Draft Environmental Impact Report and Public Hearings for the Proposed scwd² Regional Seawater Desalination Project

SANTA CRUZ, Calif. (May 10, 2013)

The City of Santa Cruz (City) and the Soquel Creek Water District (District) have partnered to evaluate the **scwd²** Regional Seawater Desalination Project (proposed project). A Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) (SCH# 2010112038) for the proposed project, which would be located in the greater Santa Cruz area and provide up to 2.5 million gallons per day (mgd) of supplemental water, will be released for public review on Monday, May 13, 2013.

Both agencies have conducted evaluations of their water shortage challenges and have identified the need for a reliable supplemental water source that will (1) provide needed supply during droughts, (2) allow for more water to be left in local streams and rivers to protect threatened and endangered fish, and (3) restore protective groundwater levels to help prevent contamination of our groundwater supply by seawater intrusion.

"While conservation and cutbacks during drought conditions have helped reduce overall water use, a supplemental supply is needed to meet customer needs and environmental obligations," said Bill Kocher, Water Director for the City of Santa Cruz.

The City's Integrated Water Plan (IWP) process and the District's Integrated Resources Plan (IRP) process both identified a diversified approach of prioritizing water conservation, curtailment (or cutbacks) during drought conditions, and seawater desalination as the preferred supplemental supply to meet short and long term needs. In 2007, the agencies partnered to form the **scwd²** Desalination Program to further evaluate desalination and have been conducting numerous studies to inform the environmental review of the proposed project.

The public is encouraged to review and comment on the Draft EIR.

"We have conducted a thorough analysis to identify and evaluate the environmental effects of the proposed project so that policy makers, community members and other stakeholders can be

informed and able to participate in the environmental review process,” stated Heidi Luckenbach, scwd² Desalination Program Coordinator.

The Draft EIR will be released for public review on Monday, May 13, 2013 and identifies the significant and potentially significant effects of the proposed project on the environment and considers feasible mitigation measures and/or alternatives to substantially lessen or eliminate the significant environmental effects.

“We are often asked, ‘What about more conservation and water transfers instead of the proposed desalination project?’ These alternatives plus others that were raised in previous planning documents and through the public scoping period are addressed in the Draft EIR,” explained Melanie Mow Schumacher, scwd² Public Outreach Coordinator.

The Draft EIR will be available for public review and comment from May 13, 2013 – July 15, 2013. Copies of the Draft EIR can be reviewed at the following locations:

- Project website at www.scwd2desal.org
- City of Santa Cruz Water Department, 212 Locust St., Suite C, Santa Cruz, CA
- Soquel Creek Water District Office, 5180 Soquel Drive, Soquel, CA
- Offices of the County Clerk of the Board and the City of Santa Cruz, City Clerk
- Local public library reference desks in the greater Santa Cruz area: Downtown Branch, Branciforte Branch, Garfield Park Branch, Live Oak Branch, Capitola Branch, Aptos Branch, La Selva Branch, Scotts Valley Branch and Porter Memorial Library

As part of the planning process, public hearings will be held to solicit comments on the draft environmental document for the proposed project. Public hearings are scheduled for:

- Monday, June 3, 2013 at Seacliff Inn, 7500 Old Dominion Ct, Aptos: 12:00 PM – 2:30 PM
- Monday, July 1, 2013 at First Congregational Church, 900 High Street, Santa Cruz: 6:30 PM – 9:00 PM

Each hearing will include an open house and presentation, followed by a public comment period. Generally the same information will be presented at each meeting.

Written comments on the Draft EIR should be sent by mail or email before 5:00 p.m. on July 15, 2013 to:

Heidi Luckenbach
scwd² Desalination Program Coordinator
City of Santa Cruz, Water Department
212 Locust Street, Suite C
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Email: hluckenbach@cityofsantacruz.com

For more information please contact Melanie Mow Schumacher at melanies@soquelcreekwater.org or by phone at (831) 475-8501 ext. 153. For more information about scwd², visit the website: www.scwd2desal.org

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PRESS RELEASE

Date: June 28, 2013

scwd² Contact: Melanie Mow Schumacher
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City of Santa Cruz Contact: Eileen Cross
Phone: (831) 676-7090
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Community Opportunity to Respond to the Draft Desal Project EIR Extended to Mid-August Reminder of Second Public Hearing to be held Monday, July 1

Santa Cruz, California – The draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed **scwd²** Regional Seawater Desalination Project (proposed project) was made available on May 13, 2013. An important part of the EIR process is the public review and the City of Santa Cruz and Soquel Creek Water District, as co-lead agencies, provided a 60-day period for the public to read and provide their comments. Several Santa Cruz and District area residents have asked the agencies for an extension to the comment period, citing the desire for more time to read the EIR and prepare their comments.

Santa Cruz Mayor Hilary Bryant and Soquel Creek Water District Board President Tom Lahue appreciate the community's interest in local water issues and the desalination project. *"It's clear that the public has become engaged in discussing our future water supply. Extending the comment period allows more people to join in the discussions. It's my hope that this additional time will enable more involvement,"* said Mayor Bryant.

The comment period was scheduled to close on July 15, but has been extended another month, to Monday, August 12. Heidi Luckenbach, **scwd²** Desalination Program Coordinator, has been receiving written public comments since the day after the EIR was released. *"I've been receiving comments for several weeks now. Some days I get one or two, other days they trickle in all day. I'm pleased to see that residents are reading the EIR and providing comments."* Luckenbach added that though the EIR comment period was already two weeks longer than required by the State, she too supports the opportunity that the time extension could provide. *"The community will be making a very important decision about what the future will look like. Adding more time to the comment period enables more people to be informed and participate."*

A public meeting to receive formal oral comments was held on June 3 in Aptos, and another is scheduled for Monday, July 1 at First Presbyterian Church in Santa Cruz (900 High Street, Santa Cruz) during a Santa Cruz

Water Commission regular meeting. An informational open house where people can ask questions and review display boards will start at 6:30PM, followed by a brief presentation by the author of the Draft EIR and oral comments from the public. Luckenbach is hopeful that the Monday night meeting will be well attended. "I encourage people I speak with to attend a public meeting. But if they can't make a meeting, they can still email or mail me their comments through mid-August." Written comments can be sent by email or mail before 5PM on August 12, 2013 to:

Heidi Luckenbach
scwd² Desalination Program Coordinator
City of Santa Cruz, Water Department
212 Locust Street, Suite C
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Email: hluckenbach@cityofsantacruz.com

For more information on the EIR or to access a copy of the EIR, visit: <http://www.scwd2desal.org/EIR>

For tips on providing effective comments to the draft EIR, visit: http://www.scwd2desal.org/Page-Project-phases_EIR_FAQs_Commenting.php

*The City of Santa Cruz and Soquel Creek Water District have conducted evaluations of their water shortage challenges and have identified the need for a reliable supplemental water source that will (1) provide needed supply during droughts, (2) allow for more water to be left in local streams and rivers to protect threatened and endangered fish, and (3) restore protective groundwater levels to help prevent contamination of our groundwater supply by seawater intrusion. The City's Integrated Water Plan (IWP) process and the District's Integrated Resources Plan (IRP) process both identified a diversified approach of prioritizing water conservation, curtailment (or cutbacks) during drought conditions, and seawater desalination as the preferred supplemental supply to meet short and long term needs. In 2007, the agencies partnered to form the **scwd²** Desalination Program to further evaluate desalination and have been conducting numerous studies to inform the environmental review of the proposed project.*

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**** This is a resend of the press release sent out on Friday, June 28. The meeting location for the public hearing on July 1 will be held at First Congregational Church, not First Presbyterian Church. The location was correct: 900 High Street in Santa Cruz. *****



PRESS RELEASE

Date: June 30, 2013

scwd² Contact: Melanie Mow Schumacher
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City of Santa Cruz Contact: Eileen Cross
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Email: ecross@cityofsantacruz.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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