



City of Santa Cruz Water Department and Soquel Creek Water District scwd² Desalination Program

Monthly Project Update & Latest News– September 2012

Santa Cruz Water Commission takes on Key Role with EIR for Desal Project and the City's Integrated Water Plan Components

At its August 27 meeting, Santa Cruz Water Commissioners agreed to carry out the City Council's recommendation that the Commission hear comments from the community during the public review period of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) and the final EIR. These would be public hearings and the Commission would then provide their comments/recommendations to the City Council. In addition, the Commission formed an ad-hoc committee to discuss the development of a comprehensive work plan related to the City's Integrated Water Plan. This Work Plan is scheduled to be presented to the Commission in October 2012.

Congressman Sam Farr Meets with Project Team to learn about Proposed Desalination Project

California is facing a water shortage crisis and water supply planning is important to local, state, and federal officials. In August, Congressman Sam Farr came to the greater Santa Cruz area and met with representatives from the City of Santa Cruz and Soquel Creek Water District to learn about the local water shortage issues and the agencies' integrated water plans that include conservation, curtailment, and continued evaluation of desalination to ensure delivery of a reliable and sustainable water supply.

The Ballot Initiative on Desalination: Measure P

Several residents have inquired about what is the difference between the upcoming Measure P initiative, which will be placed on the ballot for Santa Cruz residents this November, and the City's ordinance which calls for a vote in 2014.

- The City Council adopted Ordinance 2012-3 in March which formalized the addition of Chapter 16.10 to the Santa Cruz Municipal Code requiring voter approval to construct a desalination project. The ordinance ensures residents have the right to vote on the project after the environmental review is complete. (*at a regularly scheduled election in June or November 2014*).
- Measure P is a citizens'- generated initiative to amend the City's Charter to require a vote (*in either June or November 2014*) for approval to construct a desalination project after the environmental review is completed.

The City's Election Page on its website has posted arguments, rebuttals, and the City Attorney's impartial analysis: <http://www.cityofsantacruz.com/index.aspx?page=207>. There you will see arguments for Measure P include guaranteeing a right to vote since it would be amended in the City's charter instead of the municipal code. Arguments against Measure P include that the City has already formalized a vote to occur in 2014 so Measure P's two-step process is unnecessary and that a thorough environmental review with alternative evaluations is currently being conducted.

Next scwd² Task Force Meeting will be October 17, 2012

The September Task Force meeting has been cancelled. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 17, 2012. Items to be discussed include the schedule for releasing the Draft EIR for public review and comment as well as an update on project costs, including a breakdown of latest cost estimates and assumptions. For more information, visit: <http://www.scwd2desal.org>.

Future Water Awareness Events in September

Come on by the Water Awareness Booth at the Aptos Farmers Market on September 15 (8am-noon) or at the Santa Cruz County Fair Booth from September 11-16 in the Harvest Building to learn about local water supplies, water shortage issues, ways to conserve, and water supply alternatives currently being evaluated or operating in Santa Cruz County (such as recycled water, surface water transfers, and desalination).

Evaluation of Desalination Plants within California Prepared by Pacific Institute

The Pacific Institute recently released a white paper entitled "Proposed Seawater Desalination Facilities in California" (July 2012) which concluded interest in seawater desalination remains high in California and many agencies throughout the state are continuing to conduct technical and environmental studies (including pilot programs) to determine whether to develop full-scale projects. This white paper includes information on 19 seawater desalination projects proposed for development along the California Coast and includes the City of Santa Cruz/Soquel Creek Water District (scwd2) project. For a link to the white paper, click: http://www.pacinst.org/reports/desalination_2013/full_report.pdf.

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