



County of Monterey

Item No.

Board Report

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

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The Planning Committee to review and consider recommending the Agency's Board of Directors recommend the Agency's Board of Supervisors adopt a Memorandum of Understanding to memorialize coordination among agencies towards implementation of the Monitoring Plan for the Deep Aquifers.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Monterey County Water Resources Agency Planning Committee:

Consider recommending the Agency's Board of Directors recommend the Agency's Board of Supervisors adopt a Memorandum of Understanding to memorialize coordination among agencies towards implementation of the Monitoring Plan for the Deep Aquifers.

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

In 2024, Montgomery & Associates completed the Deep Aquifers Study ("Study") for the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency ("SVBGSA") and collaborative funding partners, which included Alisal Water Company, California Water Service, the Castroville Community Services District, the City of Salinas, the County of Monterey, Irrigated Agriculture, the Marina Coast Water District Groundwater Sustainability Agency ("MCWDGSA"), and the Monterey County Water Resources Agency ("MCWRA"). The Study addresses critical questions regarding the geology and hydrogeology of the Salinas Valley's Deep Aquifers and provides a scientific basis for sustainable management.

The Study included recommendations for refining existing monitoring networks to track trends, identify changes, and enhance the understanding of groundwater conditions in the Deep Aquifers which, as defined in the Study, are present within portions of the 180/400-Foot Aquifer Subbasin, the Forebay Subbasin, the Monterey Subbasin, and the Seaside Subbasin, which spans multiple groundwater management jurisdictions within the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin.

In response to the Study recommendations related to monitoring the Deep Aquifers, the MCWRA prepared, in cooperation with other agencies, the Monitoring Plan for the Deep Aquifers in the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin ("Monitoring Plan"). The Monitoring Plan captures, in a single document, the type and frequency of existing monitoring of the Deep Aquifers that is conducted by the MCWRA, the MCWDGSA, the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District ("MPWMD") and the Seaside Groundwater Basin Watermaster ("SGBW"). The Monitoring Plan also presents an approach for enhancing and expanding monitoring of groundwater levels, groundwater quality, and groundwater

extraction in the Deep Aquifers to minimize or eliminate data gaps and improve the collective regional understanding of conditions in the Deep Aquifers.

There are 5 groundwater management agencies spanning the Deep Aquifers. Each agency has its own governance and performs various monitoring tasks throughout the Deep Aquifers. The purpose of the Memorandum of Understanding is to generally describe each agency's respective activities, and the respective commitments to cooperate towards implementation of the Monitoring Plan, including the annual sharing of data and reevaluation of the Monitoring Plan to make adjustments, as appropriate, as new information emerges. The MOU also provides each participating agency's governing body and the public at large a non-technical explanation of the roles of each agency and the cooperation necessary to better implement the Monitoring Plan.

Monitoring, data collection, reporting, and sharing of information among agencies are essential activities that support sound and sustainable groundwater management decisions. Each agency party to the MOU relies upon the monitoring activities of other agencies to help inform groundwater management decisions within each agency's jurisdiction that affects the shared Deep Aquifers resource. In addition to the agencies who are party to the MOU, the County of Monterey is responsible for land use decisions in unincorporated areas, and its Health Department is responsible for the permitting of well construction. Each can also benefit from the Monitoring Plan and collaboration envisioned by the MOU.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

Adoption of the Memorandum of Understand aligns with the adopted Strategic Plan Goal B, Strategies 2, 5, and 7; Goal C, Strategy 6, and Goal E, Strategy 1.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Basin Management Advisory Committee

FINANCING:

Adoption of the Memorandum of Understand has no fiscal impact on the adopted 2025-26 fiscal-year budget.

Prepared and Approved by: Ara Azhderian, General Manager, (831) 755-4860

Attachments:

1. DRAFT Memorandum of Understand for the Monitoring Plan for the Deep Aquifers