



Monterey County

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Board Report

Legistar File Number: 16-199

February 23, 2016

Introduced: 2/8/2016

Version: 1

Current Status: Agenda Ready

Matter Type: General Agenda Item

Consider receiving an update on the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) process.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Monterey County Board of Supervisors:

Receive an update on the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) process.

SUMMARYDISCUSSION:

In September 2014, Governor Brown signed into law the SGMA, which took effect on January 1, 2015. This Act is complex, and clean-up language is expected. In the meantime, however, entities that would be required to implement the SGMA need to embark on a series of steps to meet a timeline where the clock is already ticking.

On October 27, 2014, the Board of Directors (BOD) of the Monterey County Water Resources Agency (Agency) approved a recommendation that the Agency become the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) for "...areas of Monterey County that are not covered by another named in the SGMA." The Agency's Board of Supervisors (WRABOS) directed Agency Staff to initiate at public process to gain stakeholder input. After three meetings in January 2015, other stakeholder groups indicated their preference for a more inclusive process. In response to that feedback, a "Consortium" was developed to initiate a facilitated process that included the following entities: Monterey County, the Agency, the Cities of the Salinas Valley (represented by the City of Salinas), as well as three representatives from the agricultural industry (Grower-Shipper Association, Monterey County Farm Bureau, and the Salinas Valley Water Coalition).

A Request for Proposals for facilitation services was released and a facilitator has been selected. The facilitator has been performing interviews with key stakeholders and compiling information. The first public meeting/workshop (two hours in duration) was held on January 21, 2016 at the Monterey County Government Center, Monterey Room. A report presenting the findings from the interviews is attached to this report.

Another GSA-related activity occurring is related to basin boundary modifications; and, this process has a short time-frame; requests for basin boundary modifications need to be in to the state Department of Water Resources by March 31, 2016. The County/Agency is looking at refining the boundaries of specific basins. The County/Agency will be proposing to modify or seek modifications of basin boundaries for the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin, the Seaside Groundwater Basin, and the Pajaro Groundwater Basin.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The County Administrative Office - IGLA, County Counsel and the Resource Management Agency have been involved with the SGMA process.

FINANCING:

The extent to which SGMA will affect the budget is unknown at this time since the Agency does not know the role it will play in the to-be-formed GSA. It is believed that the State would provide funding for the development of basin sustainability plans, and there would be fees and other revenues that would come from the enactment of SGMA and the related GSA.

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Attachments:

1. DRAFT Salinas Valley Groundwater Stakeholder Issue Assessment Report
2. PowerPoint Presentation