

..Title

Receive a status report on progress and preliminary recommendations from the Ninety-Day Working Group relating to seawater intrusion into the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin.

..Report

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Monterey and Monterey County Water Resources Agency:

Receive a status report on progress and preliminary recommendations from the Ninety-Day Working Group relating to seawater intrusion into the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin.

SUMMARY:

In October 2017, the Monterey County Water Resources Agency (Agency) released a report titled *Recommendations to Address the Expansion of Seawater Intrusion in the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin* (Report). On December 12, 2017, the Board of Supervisors of the County of Monterey and Monterey County Water Resources Agency (Board) directed County and Agency staff to coordinate with the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (SVBGSA) and report back to the Board with a strategy for implementation of these, or other, recommendations at forty-five and ninety day intervals.

In response, the Ninety-Day Working Group (Working Group) was formed, a nine-member group which includes staff from the County (Health Department) and Agency, and staff and Board members from the SVBGSA. The Working Group also includes a facilitator from the Consensus Building Institute. The Working Group has met three times, on January 11, February 9, and February 16, 2018. The Working Group is considering the recommendations in the Report and discussions are ongoing to formulate recommendations that will be brought to this Board for consideration, as well as to stakeholders, the Agency Board of Directors, and the SVBGSA Board of Directors. The Working Group requests that the Board receive this update on the group's discussions and preliminary recommendations.

DISCUSSION:

The Working Group used the recommendations in the Report as a starting point and has moved forward with the goal of developing comparable recommendations that speak to (1) what should be done; (2) who should do it; and (3) how it will be paid for.

The Working Group has also recognized that there are multiple time frames over which the recommendations may apply, including the short term (within the next two years), the mid-term (two to four year), and the long term (up to twenty years); development of a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) by the SVBGSA will occur within two to four years. These varied time frames for implementation are being considered along with the recommendations.

Following are the preliminary recommendations which the Working Group expects to refine over the coming weeks, both through continued internal review and based upon input from stakeholders.

1. An immediate moratorium on new wells within the 180-Foot and 400-Foot Aquifers of

the 180/400 Foot Aquifer Subbasin within an identified Area of Impact.

- a. The Area of Impact to which this would apply will be an expansion of the Area of Impact identified in the October 2017 Report.
2. Initiate and diligently proceed with enhancement and expansion of the Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project (CSIP) Service Area.
 - a. Include the finalization of an annexation plan and expansion of CSIP in the GSP planning process.
3. Following expansion of the CSIP Service Area, termination of all pumping from existing wells in the 180- or 400-Foot Aquifers within the Area of Impact, with exemptions for domestic and municipal water supply wells, CSIP supplemental wells, and monitoring wells.
4. Identify funding for and, within 90 to 180 days, initiate destruction of the eight (8) wells within Agency Zone 2B that are identified in the Report as “urgent” priority.
 - a. Proceed with destruction of the remaining 134 wells within Zone 2B.
5. Until the completion of an investigation of the Deep Aquifers or implementation of the GSP, whichever occurs first, minimize the construction of wells in the Deep Aquifers within the identified Area of Impact. Consider allowing only construction of replacement wells.
 - a. Develop and implement a definition for “replacement well”.
 - b. Require the destruction of the existing well that is being replaced by a replacement well in the Deep Aquifers.
 - c. Domestic and municipal water supply wells should be exempt from this replacement well requirement.
6. Initiate and diligently proceed with an investigation to determine the long-term viability of the Deep Aquifers.
7. Require well owners to meter groundwater extractions and monitor groundwater levels and quality in all existing and replacement wells in the Deep Aquifers, and submit all data to the Agency, SVBGSA, and/or other identified agency or department.
8. Prioritize data collection, processing, and analysis of water quality data so that timely reports on the extent of seawater intrusion are made available by the Water Resources Agency.

In the coming weeks, the Working Group will continue to refine these recommendations and will seek stakeholder input prior to bringing a final report, including recommendations, back to the Board in April 2018.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Monterey County Health Department; Monterey County Water Resources Agency; Salinas

Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency

FINANCING:

There is no financial impact for receiving this status report from the Working Group. The financial impacts of funding any actions directed by the Board as a result of the Working Group's recommendations would be addressed in connection with the consideration of those actions.

Prepared by:

Approved by: